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THE
HORSE AND HIS RIDER

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THE
HORSE AND HIS RIDER

An Anecdotic Medley

BY

‘THORMANBY’

AUTHOR OF ‘MEN OF THE TURF’ ETC.



London
CHATTO & WINDUS, PICCADILLY
1888

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THE HORSE AND HIS RIDER

CHAPTER I.

THE ARAB AND HIS STEED.

THE Arab is in many respects entitled to take the lead among all the breeds of horses. The pace of these animals is rapid and graceful; they are hardy, and can continue travelling at the rate of from fifty to sixty miles a day; and five or six pounds weight of coarse barley in the evening is a sufficient feed. The horses of Arabia are divided into two classes, ignoble and noble: the former they call by a name which signifies ‘without pedigree;’ the latter by another name, which means ‘known for two thousand years.’ ‘If,’ says an Arab story, ‘you meet one of the faithful in the desert mounted upon a *kochlani*, and he shall say, “God bless you!” before you can say, “And God’s blessing upon you,” he shall be out of your horizon, for the whirlwind toils after him in vain.’

The best horses are understood to be bred by the Bedouins of the north part of Arabia, and the genealogy is invariably reckoned from the mother. Those of the pure blood are more readily and cheaply obtained from the people about the towns than from the nomads of the desert, for the latter have a strong affection for their horses, and will hardly part with them at any price. It sometimes happens, however, that there is an 'unlucky mark' on the horse, as the superstitious Arab imagines, and then a really good thoroughbred Arabian steed can be obtained for a very small sum.

But the European who purchases horses of the Arabs will require all his wits, for the simple sons of the desert, although very romantic, are reputed to be most accomplished cheats. They beat even Yorkshiremen at horse-dealing.

Learned Mussulmans have written a great number of books upon horses, in which they discourse at considerable length upon their colours, upon all that is esteemed beneficial or injurious, their maladies, and the right mode of treatment. One of them, Abou-Obeïda, a contemporary of the son of Haroun-al-Raschid, composed no fewer than fifty volumes on the horse. This Abou-Obeïda met with a little misadventure, which shows that it is not the author of the most ponderous and numerous volumes who imparts the soundest information, and that not the worst plan is to consult men themselves.

‘How many books hast thou written upon the horse?’ asked one day of a celebrated Arab poet, the vizir of Mamoun, the son of Haroun-al-Raschid. ‘Only one.’ Then turning to Abou-Obeïda, he put to him the same question. ‘Fifty,’ replied he. ‘Rise, then,’ said the vizir. ‘Go up to that horse, and repeat the name of every part of his frame, taking care to point out the position of each.’ ‘I am not a veterinary surgeon,’ answered Abou-Obeïda. ‘And thou?’ said the vizir to the poet.

‘Upon that’—it is the poet himself who relates the anecdote—‘I rose from my seat, and taking the animal by the forelock, I began to name one part after another, placing my hand upon each to indicate its position; and at the same time recited all the poetic allusions, all the sayings and proverbs referring to it. When I had finished, the vizir said to me, “Take the horse.” I took it; and if ever I wished to annoy Abou-Obeïda, I rode the animal on my way to visit him.’¹

General Daumas, from whom we have just quoted, was a distinguished officer of the French army, who served sixteen years in Algeria. For two years he was consul at Mascara, accredited to the Emir Abdel-Kader, and afterwards for a considerable time Central Director of the Arab Office of Algeria—posts which brought him in close contact with the native

¹ *The Horses of the Sahara*, by General Daumas, translated by James Hutton.

chiefs He gives the following further interesting particulars of the Arab horses :

‘The Arabs of Sahara are very particular as to the colour of their horses. White is the colour for princes, but does not stand heat. The black brings good fortune, but fears rocky ground. The chestnut is the most active. If one tells you that he has seen a horse fly in the air, ask of what colour it was ; if he replies, “Chestnut,” believe him.’ ‘In a combat against a chestnut you must have a chestnut.’ The bay is the hardiest and most sober. ‘If one tells you a horse has leaped to the bottom of a precipice without hurting himself, ask of what colour he was, and if he replies “Bay,” believe him.’

Ben Dyab, a renowned chief of the desert, happening one day to be pursued by Saad-el-Zenaty, turned to his son and asked, ‘What horses are in front of the enemy?’ ‘White horses,’ replied the son. ‘It is well ; let us make for the sunny side, and they will melt away like butter.’ Some time afterwards Ben Dyab again turned to his son and said, ‘What horses are in front of the enemy?’ ‘Black horses,’ cried his son. ‘It is well ; let us make for stony ground, and we shall have nothing to fear ; they are the negroes of the Soudan, who cannot walk with bare feet upon the flints.’ He changed his course, and the black horses were speedily distanced. A third time Ben Dyab asked, ‘And now what horses are in the front of the

enemy?' 'Dark chestnuts and dark bays.' 'In that case,' said Ben Dyab, 'strike out, my children, strike out, and give your horses the heel; for these might perchance overtake us had we not given barley to ours all the summer through.'

The dark dappled gray is also highly esteemed, especially when the head is of a lighter colour than the body.

The coat most despised is the piebald: 'Flee him like the pestilence, for he is own brother to the cow.'

The roan is called *meghedeur-el-deum*, 'a pool of blood.' The rider is sure to be overtaken, but will never overtake.¹

The Arab horse-dealer therefore sells his horses which happen to be of the unlucky colours to the infidels, *i.e.* Europeans, who are not quite so superstitious; and the consequence is that many a good Arab horse, bought in Algeria or Egypt for a mere trifle, finds its way to England, France, or India.

The training the Arab horse has to endure is not only very severe, but it embraces a more varied system of exercise than falls to the lot of the English horse. The Arabs not only train their horses to endure fatigue, hunger, and thirst, and the manœuvres so necessary in battle, but they also teach them to shine at feasts by the following accomplishments:

El Entrabe, 'the caracol.' The horse walks, so

¹ Daumas, *The Horses of the Sahara*.

to speak, on his hind legs. Scarcely does he touch the ground with his fore-feet than he rises again. One hand, in concert with the legs, soon trains to this exercise a horse of fair intelligence.

El Gueteña, 'the bucking.' The horse springs up with all fours off the ground, the horseman at the same time throwing up his gun into the air and cleverly catching it. To obtain this action, the rider marks certain intervals of rest, and works with his legs. He gives with the animal as it rises, in order to hold him up when he comes down again. Nothing can be more picturesque than this movement. The horses quit the earth, the guns fly into the air, and the ample folds of the burnous float and unroll themselves in the wind, thrown back by the vigorous arms of the children of the desert.

Lastly, *El Berraka*, 'the kneeling.' The rider, remaining on his saddle, causes his horse to kneel down. This is the *ne plus ultra* of the horse and the animal. Not every horse is fit for this exercise. The colt is trained to it by tickling him on the coronet, pinching him on the legs, and forcing him to bend the knee. After a time the horseman will reap the benefit of these preliminary steps. He need only clear his feet of the stirrups, stretch his legs forward, turn out the points of his toes, touch with his long spurs the animal's forearm, and then, as his piece is fired at marriage-feasts and other rejoicings, his horse will kneel down, amid the applause of the

young maidens, piercing the air with joyful acclamations.¹

Nevertheless, endurance is the quality most cultivated in the Arab horse. It is necessary that the horse should be able to travel long distances upon scanty food and little water, for in the African deserts the places where man and horse can refresh are few and far between; wells are many miles apart, and even when the traveller has found water for himself and steed, the chances are that no food can be had, except what the horse and his rider have brought with them from their last halting-place.

‘Every horse inured to fatigue brings good fortune,’ the Arabs say. So to speak, he is always on the march. He travels with his master, who is one of the greatest travellers on horseback in the world. He travels to seek his food; he traverses long distances in search of water, and this sort of life renders him abstinent and not easily tired. Sidi-Hamed-Ben-Mohammed-el-Mokhrani, the chief of one of the most illustrious families of all Algeria, says:

‘During my long career, in my tribes, by my friends, or among my followers, I have seen upwards of ten thousand colts reared, and I affirm that all those whose education was not begun at a very early age have never turned out other than stubborn troublesome horses, unfit for war. I also affirm that

¹ Daumas, *The Horses of the Sahara*.

when I have made long and rapid marches, at the head of twelve or fifteen hundred horsemen, horses, however lean, if early broken in to fatigue, never fell out of the ranks, whilst those that were fat, or mounted too late, have always fallen to the rear. My conviction on this head is based on such a long experience, that lately, finding myself at Masseur (Cairo) in the necessity of purchasing some horses, I refused point-blank all that were presented to me that had been broken in at a comparatively advanced age.

“How has thy horse been reared?” was always my first question.

“My lord,” an inhabitant of the city would reply, “this gray stone of the river has been brought up by me like one of my own children, always well fed, well tended to, and spared as much as possible, for I did not begin to ride him till he was full four years old. See how fat he is, how sound in all his limbs.”

“Well, keep him, my friend; he is thy pride and that of thy family. It would be a shame to my gray beard to deprive thee of him.”

“And thou,” I would then ask of an Arab, whom I recognised as a child of the desert, so embrowned was he by the sun—“how has thy horse been reared?”

“My lord,” he would answer, “betimes I formed his back to the saddle and his mouth to the bridle. With him I have reached a distant, very distant point. He has passed many a day without food.

His ribs are bare, it is true ; but if you encounter any enemies on your path he will not leave you in peril. I swear it by the day of last judgment, when Allah shall be kadi, and the angels witnesses.”

““Hola, there ! tether the dark chestnut before my tent,” I would cry to my servants, “and satisfy this man.””¹

But although the Arab horse is worked hard, it is most tenderly treated, as a rule—petted as the collier in England pets his dog—at the expense of the rest of the family.

‘The love the Arabs bear their mares is exemplified by an anecdote which was told me,’ says the ‘Old Shekarry,’ ‘by a celebrated Arab chieftain who served on my staff in the Crimea, Mahomet Ben Abdullah, better known as Bou Maza (the son of the Goat), whose daring exploits and hairbreadth escapes in his predatory expeditions against the French have caused his name to become famous in song among the Santons of the desert. One of the tribes of the Djedjura mountains possessed a coal-black mare of the pure Nedjed breed, which in the desert was of untold value ; for her fame had gone forth far and wide, and the tribes were wont to swear by her fleetness and endurance. Bou Maza, then a young man, determined to possess her either by fair or foul means, and offered the whole of his wealth in ex-

¹ Daumas, *The Horses of the Sahara*.

change, viz. several tents and slaves, forty camels, and even his two wives; but nothing would induce Ben Ali the Sheikh (who was the principal owner) to part with her. Bou Maza, who was on friendly terms with the Djdhura tribes, then determined to obtain her by stealth; but this was a difficult operation, as there were always people watching night and day. After many days' consideration, and severe praying to Allah to sharpen his wits, he fixed upon a plan, and forthwith proceeded to execute it. He cut himself with a knife about the face and chest, and wounded his horse; and one day about noon claimed the protection of Ben Ali the Sheikh, stating that he had been attacked by some Arabs of a neighbouring tribe, with whom there was a bloody feud, who were lurking about in the vicinity. The Sheikh sent out his young men to retaliate and follow up the supposed aggressors, whilst he and the hakeem of the tribe bound up the wounds and attended on Bou Maza, who, pretending to be in a dying state, begged that they would carry him out to a sward where the cattle of the tribe were grazing, so that he might turn his face towards the sacred city, and perform his devotions. His wish was complied with, and he soon had the gratification of beholding this famous mare cropping the stunted herbage a short distance from the clump of date-trees under the shade of which he was lying. She was strictly watched by two of the tribe, who for two hours hardly ever

seemed to take their eyes off her; and Bou Maza began to think that the young men would return before his undertaking could be accomplished. He therefore uttered a loud cry, as if in agony, which brought the watchers to his side, and, selecting his opportunity, he plunged a knife, which he had concealed under his dress, into their breasts, killing them ere they could utter a cry; and, flinging his burnous (cloak) over their bodies, unfastened the tether which hobbled the mare's fore-feet, and, springing on her back, was far away in the desert before the theft was discovered. When it was found out, the Sheikh Ben Ali, whose son was one of the slain, and all the men of the tribe, set out in pursuit, and, after a chase of three days, almost surprised him near one of those immense salt-marshes which are so numerous in Algeria, in a place where there was no way of escape but across this dangerous ground; and Bou Maza was about to attempt it, when the Sheikh Ben Ali, seeing the ignominious fate that awaited his beloved mare, forgot his revenge for the loss of his son, and begged him to forbear, giving him his sacred pledge that his tribe should not molest him, or continue the pursuit for three days, should he do so, preferring to run the chance of regaining her another time to seeing her perish before his eyes. Bou Maza accepted the pledge, and got away. Another time he was hard run by the same tribe, and the Sheikh, who headed the pursuing party, being

mounted upon the own brother of the mare, finding he was not gaining ground, desisted from the chase, and cried out for him to stop and not fatigue the mare to save his wretched life, and bidding him drink the water in which her feet were washed, in token of his being indebted to her for his preservation. The abduction of this celebrated mare gave rise to a feud between the tribes, in which several hundred Arabs lost their lives; and she participated in most of Bou Maza's daring exploits which made his name so terrible to those tribes who had submitted to the French.'¹

This story shows that the lawful owner of the mare would rather the thief should get away with her in safety than that she should be injured by overwork. This is not an uncommon kind of occurrence.

¹ *The Forest and the Field*, by the 'Old Shekarry.'

CHAPTER II.

FEATS OF ENDURANCE.

THE renowned Algerian chieftain Abd-el-Kader declared that if the true Arab horse ever treads upon ploughed land, he diminishes in value, and he illustrated the idea by the following story :

‘ A man was riding upon a horse of pure blood, when he was met by his enemy, also splendidly mounted. One pursued the other, and he who gave chase was distanced by him who fled. Despairing of reaching him, the pursuer in anger shouted out,

“ I ask, in the name of God, has your horse ever worked on land ? ”

“ He has worked on land for four days.”

“ Very well—mine never has ; and, by the beard of the Prophet, I am sure to catch you.”

‘ Towards the close of the day the horse that never laboured was the victor ; and as the rider of the degraded horse sank under the blows of his enemy, he said,

“ There has been no blessing upon our country since we changed our coursers into beasts of burden

and of tillage. Has not God made the ox for the plough, the camel to transport merchandise, and the horse alone for the race? There is nothing gained by changing the ways of God'' (T. B. Thorpe).

And if the Arab horses are capable of doing the amount of work stated in the following tale (which comes from one of the French generals in Algeria), they ought to be highly prized:

‘With regard to the great distances accomplished by the horses of the desert of Sahara, instances may be quoted which will appear incredible, and the heroes of which are still alive (1863), if witnesses were wanted to confirm the truth of the story. Here is one of a thousand, which was told to me by a man of the tribe of Arbâa. I give his own words:

“‘I had come into the Tell (a most fertile district – the granary, in fact, of the Sahara) with my father and the people of my tribe to buy corn. It was in the time of the Pasha Ali. The Arbâa had had some terrible quarrels with the Turks; and as it was their interest for the moment to feign a complete submission in order to obtain an amnesty for the past, they agreed to win over by presents of money the Pasha’s suite, and to send to himself not merely a common animal as was customary, but a courser of the highest distinction. It was a misfortune, but it was the will of Allah, and we were forced to resign ourselves. The choice fell upon a mare, ‘Gray Stone of the River,’ known throughout the Sahara, and the pro-

perty of my father. He was informed that he must hold himself in readiness to set out with her on the morrow for Algiers. After the evening prayer my father, who had taken care not to make any remark, came to me and said, ‘Ben-Zyan, art thou thyself to-day? Wilt thou leave thy father in a strait, or wilt thou make his face red?’

‘“‘I am nothing but your will, my lord,’ I replied. ‘Speak, and if I obey not your commands, it will be because I am vanquished by death.’

‘“‘Listen. These children of sin seek to take my mare in the hope of settling their affairs with the Sultan,—my gray mare, I say, which has always brought good fortune to my tent, to my children, and the camels; my gray mare, that was foaled on the day that thy youngest brother was born! Speak! Wilt thou let them do this dishonour to my hoary beard? The joy and happiness of the family are in thy hands. Mordjana (such was the name of the mare) has eaten her barley. If thou art of a truth my son, go and sup, take thy weapons, and then at earliest nightfall flee far away into the desert with the treasure dear to us all.’

‘“ Without answering a word I kissed my father’s hand, took my evening repast, and quitted Berouaguia, happy in being able to prove my filial affection, and laughing in my sleeve at the disappointment that awaited our sheikhs on their awaking. I pushed forward for a long time, fearing to be pursued, but

Mordjana continued to pull at her bridle, and I had more trouble to quiet her than to urge her on. When two-thirds of the night had passed, and a desire to sleep was growing upon me, I dismounted, and seizing the reins, twisted them round my wrist. I placed my gun under my head, and at last fell asleep, softly couched on one of those dwarf palms so common in our country. An hour after, I roused myself. All the leaves of the dwarf palm had been stripped off by Mordjana. We started afresh. The peep of day found us at Souagui. My mare had thrice broken out into a sweat, and thrice dried herself. I touched her with the heel. She watered at Sidi-Bou-Zid, and that evening I offered up the evening prayer at Leghrouât, after giving her a handful of straw to induce her to wait patiently for the enormous bag of barley that was coming to her. These are not journeys fit for your horses," said Ben-Zyan in conclusion, "for the horses of you Christians, who go from Algiers to Blidah—thirteen leagues—as far as from my nose to my ear, and then fancy you have done a good day's work."

‘This Arab had done *eighty leagues* in twenty-four hours (Berouaguia to Souagui, thirty-one leagues; Sidi-Bou-Zid twenty-five leagues farther on; and lastly, Leghrouât, twenty-four leagues beyond that); his mare had eaten nothing but the leaves of the dwarf palm on which he had lain down, and only once had been watered, about the middle of the journey; and

yet he swore to me by the head of the Prophet that he could have slept on the following night at Gardaya, forty-five leagues farther on, had his life been in any danger.

‘ Another Arab, Mohammed-Ben-Mokhtar by name, had come to buy corn in the Tell after the harvest. His tents were already pitched, and he had opened a business communication with the Arabs of the Tell, when the Bey Bou-Mezrag, “father of the spear,” fell upon him at the head of a strong body of cavalry to chastise one of those imaginary offences which the Turks were in the habit of inventing as pretexts for their rapacity. Not the slightest warning had been given; the razzia was complete; and the horsemen of Makhzen gave themselves up to all the atrocities customary in such cases. Mohammed-Ben-Mokhtar thereupon threw himself on his dark bay mare, a magnificent animal known and coveted throughout the Sahara, and perceiving the critical nature of the situation, at once resolved to sacrifice the whole of his property to save the lives of his three children. One of them, only four years old, he placed on the saddle before him, and another, aged six or seven, behind him, holding on by the troussequin, and was about to place the youngest in the hood of his burnous when his wife stopped him, exclaiming, “No, no; I will not let thee have this one. They will never dare to slay an infant at its mother’s breast. Away! I shall keep him with me.

Allah will protect us.” Mohammed-Ben-Mokhtar then dashed forward, fired off his piece, and got clear of the *mélée*; but being hotly pursued, he travelled all that day and the following night until he reached Leghrouât, where he could rely upon being in safety. Shortly after he received intelligence that his wife had been rescued by some friends he had in the Tell. Mohammed-Ben-Mokhtar was still alive, and the two children he carried are spoken of as two of the best horsemen of the tribe.

‘And why should I look for evidence to establish these facts? All the old officers of the Oran division can state how, in 1837, a general, attaching the greatest importance to the receipt of intelligence from Tlemcen, gave his own charger to an Arab to go and procure the news. The latter set out from Château Neuf at four o’clock in the morning, and returned the same hour on the following day, having travelled seventy leagues over ground very different from the comparatively level desert.’¹

Abd-el-Kader, when questioned about the endurance of Arab horses, replied as follows to General Daumas :

‘You ask me how many days an Arab horse can march without rest, and without suffering too severely. Know, then, that a horse, sound in every limb, that eats as much barley as his stomach can contain, can

¹ Daumas, *The Horses of the Sahara*.

do whatever his rider can ask of him. For this reason, the Arabs say, "Give barley, and overwork him." But without tasking him overmuch, a horse can be made to do sixteen parasangs day after day.¹ A horse performing this journey every day, and having as much barley as it likes to eat, can go on without fatigue for three or four months without lying by a single day.

'You ask me what distance a horse can accomplish in a day. I cannot tell you very precisely ; but it ought to be about fifty parasangs, or the distance from Tlemcen to Mascara. But an animal that has performed such a journey ought to be carefully ridden on the following day, and allowed to do only a very much shorter distance.'²

¹ A parasang is about 5,000 mètres ; sixteen parasangs are equal, in round numbers, to about fifty English miles.

² Daumas, *The Horses of the Sahara*.

CHAPTER III.

ENGLISH VERSUS ARAB THOROUGHBREDS.

THE thoroughbred racer, as we know him in England, is a different kind of animal from the Arab thoroughbred, although a considerable amount of Arab blood runs in his veins. We have no sandy desert to try the endurance of our horses. In no part of England could a horse travel at the mildest trot for a couple of hours without coming to a drinking place; food in the shape of grass is found by every roadside; so that it would be difficult for the horse to die of hunger or thirst if set at liberty.

The question whether the English thoroughbred, reared in our temperate climate, and brought up, so to speak, in luxury, could hold his own with the genuine horse of the desert, has been much discussed, and more than one trial has taken place; but the question even now is not to be considered as settled. Ever since it was proposed to make Egypt a halting-place on the road to India, a sporting spirit has been fostered in the land of the Pharaohs, and Egyptian princes and pashas have been found willing to run

their horses and stake their money against anything the English could put in the field.

One of the first intimations Englishmen had of the fact that the Egyptians were inclined for sport was the appearance of the following letter in *Bell's Life*, in October 1849 :

‘ Sir,—A challenge has been sent through me, on the part of the Pasha of Egypt, to the English Turf, which I first communicated to the Jockey Club, and now wish to notify to the public through the medium of your paper. It was my intention to have sent you the letter of our Consul-General, in which this challenge is conveyed ; but I have unfortunately mislaid it, and, after the most diligent search, have been unable to find it. I remember, however, the contents of it with sufficient accuracy to answer every purpose. Mr. Murray states that his Highness the Pasha is convinced that his Arab horses are superior to our English racehorses over a length of ground, and he proposes to test their relative merits by a match to be run in Egypt, the distance to be ten miles, the stake 10,000*l.*, which he thinks might be increased to 15,000*l.*, no limitation as to age or weight. The ground over which the match would be run is sand with a good many stones in it. He concludes by saying that if there is a disposition here to make the match, he will proceed to adjust the preliminaries. Upon the receipt of this letter, I wrote

him word that I would make this challenge public, and I thought it very probable it would be accepted, and I then put to him a great variety of questions upon certain points on which I deemed it essential that information should be supplied. Thus the matter stands at present.—C. GREVILLE.

‘ Bruton Street, Oct. 12.’

Beneath the letter, *Bell's Life* had the following paragraph :

‘ The vast superiority of the English thoroughbred horse over Arabs has been established by innumerable trials in India; and that the Cossack horses have as little chance with them will be gathered from the following account of a match in Russia, taken from the second volume of the *Stud Book* :

“ Sharper, bred by Lord Egremont, and got by Octavius out of Young Amazon by Gohanna, was sent in 1825 to Russia, where he and Minna, bred by Mr. Newton, and got by Woful out of Diana by Stamford, were matched to run seventy-five versts ($49\frac{3}{4}$ English miles) on the public road against two Cossack horses. Minna, falling lame, was pulled up early in the race, which Sharper won with ease, notwithstanding the loss of a stirrup, and the consequent inability of the rider to restrain him for several miles. The Cossack horses had nearly three stone advantage in weight, and one of them fell at the end

of twenty-five miles and died. This race was run in 1825, near St. Petersburg.”’

This challenge was not accepted by the English horse-owners, as appears from the following letter, which appeared in *Bell's Life* of August 24, 1851 :

‘About eighteen months ago, Abbas Pasha, the Governor of Egypt, challenged the Jockey Club to run their English horses against his Arabs for a distance of not less than eight to ten miles over very fair ground for a sum of 5,000*l.* to 50,000*l.*, money down, weight optional to either party, allowing also a start of three hundred yards to the English horses. This challenge was not accepted by the Jockey Club, nor did they offer it to any other gentleman, consequently the Viceroy thought they were afraid to meet him. As many of your readers, however, must be interested in knowing what an English thoroughbred horse can do amongst the Arabs, I send you an extract of a letter from Damascus, the writer of which is a Hungarian officer attached to the staff of General Guyon, now holding a command in that country :

“General Guyon's English mare is thoroughbred by Hindostan out of Lightfoot. Prince Lichtenstein brought her from England with the mother in 1848, and she is now only three and a half years old. You ask me if she ever ran against any first-rate Arab horses. I have before told you that we are very often making excursions into the Howran, to the

Dead Sea, and to Horu; and in all these excursions we pass the greater part of our time with the Bedouins, owners of the finest horses, and we are scarcely together half an hour with these gentlemen without getting up a race, and as they know our General wants to purchase, they always bring every horse likely to catch his attention. Now, I assure you that on all these occasions the mare beats them all, and in splendid style, although she has never been trained for racing; and that she can also beat them at long distances she has shown very often in hunting the gazelles, running three or four miles at a stretch until we caught them, being always a long way ahead of the Arabs. The Bedouins insist upon her being an Arab mare, though they are rather puzzled at her size, as she stands 16 hands 1 inch. From what I have seen of her performance, I think a well-trained English horse would beat any Arab whatever, and in any way. Guyon's mare, when she was only one year and a half old, went through the Hungarian campaign in 1849, so she is pretty well seasoned."

'From the above, Mr. Editor, you will see how very soft owners of English horses were when they refused the splendid challenge of Abbas Pasha, &c.
—A SUBSCRIBER.

'Cairo, Aug. 6, 1851.'

The next attempt to get up a race between

English and Arab horses is thus noticed in *Bell's Life* of March 20, 1853 :

‘About two years ago there was a great talk about a challenge given by Abbas Pasha to the Jockey Club to run his Arab against anything they could bring out from England, and for any amount; and a great difference of opinion existed among sporting men as to the probable result of a long race over uneven ground. The Jockey Club refused to run, and the match has remained an uncertainty ever since. Lately, however, a trial was made by an English half-bred mare, by Touchstone, against two of the best Arabs in this place, their own terms being granted, say, three miles on a straight unequal road, equal weight—ten stone upwards; and I am happy to tell you that the mare had it all her own way, winning in a canter, without having been pressed at all. The first half-mile was up a stiff hill, then down a gully—quarter of a mile—with a mile of level bad road, many parts under water, and the wind up, heavy sand and rising ground; distance, exactly three miles, and run in 7 min. 40 sec. The fact of this mare never having been intended to run a race in England will show what chance an Arab would have had with a thoroughbred or a steeple-chaser. But, to put the question at rest, Mr. Smart, the spirited owner of the mare, has accepted another race with an Arab belonging to his Highness Said Pasha; and, as this horse has beat everything he has

run against, the result, if favourable, will put him in a position to challenge all comers at Cairo for the long race of seven to ten miles, when no doubt he will take the conceit out of them. The race with Said Pasha's horse is to be on the same ground as the last heat, only run in a contrary direction, with an additional mile of heavy sand. You will hear from us when the thing comes off.'

This letter was dated Alexandria, March 6, 1853; and in *Bell's Life* of September 25 following came an account of a match between the English mare and an Arab belonging to Hallim Pasha, apparently substituted for that owned by Said Pasha; and it will be seen that, owing to an accident, the English horse did not win. The correspondent of that paper writes:

'On August 9 a match came off here between an English mare and an Arab horse for 350*l.* a side—distance $9\frac{1}{2}$ miles, 4 miles 7 furlongs out, and the same distance back again, without stopping. The run out was accomplished in $15\frac{3}{4}$ minutes, and the Arab returned home in $11\frac{1}{2}$ minutes, having performed the distance in $27\frac{1}{4}$ minutes. The English mare, about a mile from home, swerved from the straight road, and her jockey, in trying to turn her, upset her into a cane-fence; she thus lost the race. The English party engaged therein wish to take it up again; but Hallim Pasha, owner of the horse,

refuses to run for less than fourteen miles, and for a sum of 1,000*l.* to 10,000*l.*, and they, therefore, address themselves to the sporting world in England, in hopes that some party in England may think it worth while to try the stamina of the English horse against the Arab on the above terms.

‘The race lately run was on the Aboukir Road—4 miles 7 furlongs out, and the same back again.

‘The English mare which ran against the Arab is five years old, 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ hands high, strongly built and wide-chested, lengthy, and perfectly sound. Her sire was ——, and her dam by Touchstone, and she had already beaten every Arab we had tried against her in short distances up to three miles. But in this last race we had not sufficient time for training—say twenty days—and, in short, took it too easy; besides which we had not our former jockey, who was laid up, and we had to secure the services of a foreigner, who did not understand the thing. If she had been well ridden, we should probably have had a very different story to tell.

‘The Arab horse belongs to Hallim Pasha, one of the old Viceroy’s sons, who has constantly been using him in coursing gazelles, and has, he says, beaten, in bottom, all his other horses. In other respects he is a sorry-looking animal, 14 hands high, 6 years old, bright chestnut, and without one single point that would catch the eye of a connoisseur. Yet there is no doubt that he showed game enough in the late

race, as he was scarcely ever touched with the whip, and, after he came in, his rider did not pull up, but galloped on about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles further to take the news of his success to his owner, who was ill in bed ! This is the horse which Hallim Pasha now offers to run against anything that can be brought against him for the distance of from 14 to 40 miles, and for a sum of 1,000*l.* to 10,000*l.* a-side.'

CHAPTER IV.

A BATCH OF CURIOUS MATCHES.

IN the case just narrated the Arab horse certainly showed wonderful power of endurance; but then it should be remembered that he was at home, running in a climate to which he was accustomed, and over a course to which he was no stranger. But the question was not to be considered as settled. English officers on their way to India would still brag of the superior qualities of the English thoroughbred; so a trial of another kind took place, the particulars of which were duly published in *Bell's Life*:

‘A match which has caused quite a sensation here for some time past has at length been brought to a conclusion. It was a question of endurance between the Arab and the English horse in the desert; and this having been a much-vexed question for years past among sportsmen generally, an account of the proceedings will surely prove interesting to the readers of your columns.

‘The above-mentioned question of endurance having been raised between his Highness Prince

Hallim and Mr. Ross, the former offered to bet ten to one that no English horse could go through a week's gazelle-hunting with him in the desert; he, of course, always riding the same Arab horse. Mr. Ross at once accepted the challenge, and a bet was consequently made, the Prince laying 1,000*l.* against 100*l.* The affair was originally fixed to come off in January, but for some reason was deferred again and again until the present month. The Prince chose from his stable for this undertaking his little Arab horse Al Cissi, who, it may be remembered, won the grand Egyptian prize of 500 sovs., three miles, at the last Alexandrian race-meeting, he being then in Mr. Smart's possession; whilst Mr. Ross depended upon his chestnut mare Beechnut to accomplish the task. The Prince rode for himself; but Mr. Ross, having business matters to occupy him at home, entrusted his mount to a friend. Having been an eye-witness to the affair, I am enabled to give you an accurate account.

‘On the 14th inst., the competitors having met at Shoubrah Palace, the residence of the Prince, we started off at a canter for the first encampment in the desert at a spot near a small village called Khan-kah. An hour and a quarter brought us to our destination, neither of the horses having at all suffered, though it is to be remarked that, not having started till 4 P.M., in the cool of the day, and proceeded at a pace less than an exercise canter, there was nothing

to hurt either of them, the road being extremely good going the whole way. The mare was very restless during the whole night, and twice broke loose from her picket, though not until having eaten her supper with a hearty goodwill; while the horse, though perfectly quiet and comfortable, refused his food altogether. On the morning of the 15th, a little before sunrise, 4.30 A.M., we started for the real hunt. The mare was very fidgety, and took considerably more out of herself in consequence than if she had taken it quietly during the five and a half hours of walking before finding a gazelle. The hawks were flown and the dogs slipped at this point, and, after a run of about two miles and a half, the gazelle was taken; the two horses both were apparently as fresh now as when we started. We now started off on our way to join the tents, which had been ordered to meet us at a certain point. We proceeded at a slow canter—so slow that the English mare simply trotted over the hard ground, cantering merely through the heavy sand. Unfortunately for the mare's chance, we missed the way, and instead of going towards the camp went off in the opposite direction. After proceeding at this pace for an hour and a half, the mare, who was going within herself, with the bit between her teeth, suddenly stopped, as if shot. The rider immediately dismounted, and endeavoured to keep her on her legs, but, reeling about as if tipsy, she went a few paces forward

and then fell. The Prince immediately rode off for assistance, but returned in about twenty minutes with no aid, having found out the mistake we had made, and not knowing how far off the tents we might be. Assistance being thus rendered impossible in our present situation, the only remedy was to endeavour to procure it as quickly as possible. His Highness now dismounted, and having placed the mare's saddle on the horse, we started off on foot in the direction of the tents. Three hours and a half had elapsed before we reached the encampment, from which the Prince at once despatched his veterinary surgeon and Mr. Ross's groom to the spot where the mare was lying, to render her assistance, if not too late; they, however, returned, bringing the news of her death, and reporting that the vultures had already commenced to devour her carcass; the body was perfectly stiff, proving that she must have died very shortly after leaving her. The Arab horse on arriving at the encampment showed not the slightest sign of fatigue, and, unlike the previous night, went into his nosebag with a good will. The match was thus brought to a speedy conclusion, and I might even say satisfactory, as it proved beyond doubt, at least to all present, that for slow continued work the Arab is immeasurably superior to his English brethren. I should add that the Arab horse continued hunting the following four days, always going strong and well; at the same time the hunting on the succeed-

ing days was of shorter duration than on the first occasion. From my own personal observation of the merits and demerits of each horse, I am of opinion that for any given distance of ground the English horse would always show his superiority; but for slow, continued, and indefinite work the Arab is far superior. They seem to be able to go for ever at their own pace, but if fairly extended they shut up almost immediately. Thus in our race-meetings we have always found that in the five-mile race the English horses can beat the Arab by a mile. I think there is no doubt but that the heat alone caused the defeat of the mare, as, calculating it at the outside, she could only have gone forty miles, and, at the pace described, under ordinary circumstances it would be next to nothing to a well-trained horse; but it is a difficult question to conceive the heat in the desert, with no kind of vegetation or shade near, and with the sand reflecting back upon you. On getting in between two sand-hills, the temperature may be best imagined by fancying yourself in a hot oven. On this day we had not a breath of wind. What would it have been if a "khamseen," or hot wind, had been blowing?

E. T.

‘Cairo, May 28, 1865.’

This was not considered conclusive either, and *Bell's Life* for a few weeks was flooded with corre-

spondence on the comparative merits of the English thoroughbred and the Arab. One of the best written letters on the subject is the following, which appeared on July 8, 1865 :

‘ I observe in your issue of the 24th ult. a letter on the subject of the endurance of English and Arab horses. As I have owned Arab horses both in India and in Egypt, and made use in India of English-bred horses, Australian, Cape, and Government stud-bred horses, as well as those got by English stallions out of country-bred mares, and even the country-bred horses themselves, I venture to take up my pen on the subject of the comparative merits of the English blood and the Arab, especially at this moment, when the stamina of our horses is called in question, and the public mind is directed thereto.

‘ It appears from the match between H.H. Hallim Pasha and Mr. Ross that the English mare never had a chance in the trial, as she showed symptoms of distress soon after starting, and was evidently suffering all the way. I do not consider that this is a fair trial of the superiority of Arab horses over English as regards endurance. Much, of course, would depend upon the relative state of health and condition in which the animals were at starting, and it is also possible that the English mare had some organic defect which, though not apparent in her ordinary work, gave way when put to such a severe test. Another truth is that it is quite impossible to

judge comparatively of the merits of English and Arab horses in such a climate. English horses are like English men, they suffer as severely from heat as we do, and their frames become as relaxed ; though we both have the pluck to go in and do a good thing in a spurt when wanted, we have not the physical ability to contend in a tropical climate against its native inhabitants when the question at issue is one of endurance. Horses suffer equally with men from liver complaint, heart complaint, and disease of the lungs ; and most all the English horses of which I have been the possessor in India have evidently felt the effects of the climate and the demand on their constitution as much as I did myself. This was strikingly exemplified to me, and I had good opportunity of judging of the powers of different breeds of horses during the Mutiny campaign in 1857-8, as I then had in my stud an English horse, an Australian, a stud-bred, and several Arabs. The Australian was a thoroughbred, and the English was probably three-quarters bred, and a clever animal. The stud-bred horse showed quality also, but was as soft as butter, and I always got to the end of him the soonest of all. The Arabs were beautiful specimens of the Aweezeh caste, and as hardy and as wiry as iron. At the same time, during the winter months, or cold weather, I found little difference between the Arabs and the English or Australian horses—they all did their work well ; but

when the weather was more advanced, and the hot weather of April and May set in, the depression and lassitude of the English horse became very apparent, and he was not within stones of himself to undergo fatigue. He became fretful and impatient, and at the action of Bareilly, when stationed in the rear of a troop of horse artillery, I could scarcely get him to approach the guns, and at each discharge he sprang into the air like a rocket, nearly dragging me out of the saddle. The Australian suffered less from nervousness, but he lost condition rapidly, and I was almost obliged to put him out of work entirely by the beginning of May. The Arab horses, on the contrary, did not feel the effects of the heat in the least. As a proof of this I may mention that I had two Arab horses sent up to me from Bombay. They left that town in November, and did not reach me until the day after the final evacuation of Lucknow, about April 20, having been marching continually for five months, and having undergone many vicissitudes—being passed from column to column, and making forced marches continually, and being fed irregularly and scantily while left to the care of native syces or grooms. Still, they arrived at Lucknow in perfect trim, and continued to do fast work throughout the hot season, at the end of which period, on my leaving the field, I sold them for 400*l*. I remember well on one occasion four of my horses had a fair trial, as they, each in their turn, were

ridden on the same day. It was the day on which Lord Clyde marched from Buntara on Lucknow, before opening the siege operations. We were in the saddle at seven A.M., and were fighting all day from ten or eleven till dusk. My horses had very little rest, carrying orders, &c., and at seven o'clock I received an order to start as soon as I had dined, and meet the siege-train under Sir Robert Walpole, and conduct it to its ground. I accordingly started at once. I rode my English horse, and I did not get back from duty till about eleven A.M. the next day. I had thus been nearly twenty-eight hours in the saddle, the last twelve or fourteen of which I rode my English horse, and he stood the work well. Certainly I was tired enough myself, and I had the full means of testing the relative powers of all the horses. Neither the English horse nor the Australian showed any want of stamina; the only one that flinched was the stud-bred. Still, all things considered, I should prefer, for a long journey in that climate or in Egypt, an Arab to any other horse; his education suits him more to undergo fatigue. His stomach is habituated from infancy to scanty food and water, and his frame to endure heat and rough usage; above all, he is sounder in the legs and feet. He is a good-tempered, willing, and docile slave, and a rare agent with which to traverse a distance in an open country, and, above all, in his own climate in the months of May and June, when the "khamseen," or fifty days' hot wind,

blows loaded with sand, and the fate of the poor English mare is not to be wondered at. I lost in the same way a favourite greyhound in Arabia, in August 1850, which died of disease of the heart, after a few days' illness, the result of a distressing run after a gazelle, near the "Ayoum Mousa," or Well of Moses, on the Gulf of Suez. Poor Spring! Peace to his manes; he was buried at Jeddah with naval honours, to the horror of its Moslem inhabitants. However, all these trials bear upon the point of my letter of last week. Let us be particular in breeding from sound and stout animals.

‘COSMOPOLITE.’

An English horse that had seen some service in a hot climate like India would perhaps be the best to pit against the Arab. Our troops in India get most of their horses from Australia or the Cape of Good Hope, but there are some Arabs and some of other breeds. A great authority on horses says:

‘The best horses met with in India are, most of them, it is said, derived direct from Persia, though of Arabian origin. It is remarkable that these are also in most cases vicious and intractable, except to their known attendants, to whom, notwithstanding, they yield an obedience the very reverse of the savage nature they display to others. A general officer of the Royal Artillery related an anecdote of an Arabian for which he had given a large sum during his mili-

tary service in India. This horse was always forced to be held by two coolies for his master to mount him; and it was always necessary also that the coolie to which the horse was most attached should be present at his dismounting, to prevent his being attacked by the horse. One day, the general, having prolonged his ride beyond the accustomed hour, on his arrival at home thoughtlessly dismounted, and ran up-stairs to the drawing-room without waiting for the coolie. The consequence was that he had not entered the room many moments before the horse made his appearance, but evidently without any vicious intent, for he, immediately on seeing his master, “knuckered” with pleasure. Of course with a horse of such value it was a subject of consideration how he was to be got down again. However, when the coolie appeared he made light of the matter, and taking him by the bridle, with little trouble and no ill-consequence safely led him down the stairs; and from that time, by some strange caprice, the animal showed as much personal attachment to his master as to the favourite coolie.’¹

The Persians from the earliest ages have been a horsey nation. Every one in the country rides, and rides well too.

‘ Before 1800, no political mission from a European nation had visited the Court of Persia for a century ;

¹ Blaine’s *Encyclopædia of Rural Sports*.

but the English had fame as soldiers from the report of their deeds in India. An officer of one of the frigates which conveyed Sir John Malcolm's mission, who had gone ashore at Abusheher, and was there mounted on a spirited horse, afforded no small entertainment to the Persians by his bad horsemanship. The next day the man who supplied the ship with vegetables, and who spoke a little English, met him on board, and said, "Don't be ashamed, sir; nobody knows you. Bad rider? I tell them you, like all English, ride well, but that time they see you, *you very drunk*." The worthy Persian thought it would have been a reproach for a man of a warlike nation not to ride well, but none for a European to get drunk.

'During Sir John Malcolm's first visit to Persia, he, when riding one day near a small encampment of Afshar families, expressed doubts to his Mehmander, a Persian nobleman, as to the reputed boldness and skill in horsemanship of their females. The Mehmander immediately called to a young woman of handsome appearance, and asked her in Turkish if she was a soldier's daughter. She said she was. "And you expect to be a mother of soldiers?" She smiled. "Mount that horse," said he, pointing to one with a bridle, but without a saddle, "and show this European Elchee the difference between a girl of a tribe and a citizen's daughter." She immediately sprang upon the animal, and, setting off at full speed,

did not stop till she had reached the summit of a small hill in the vicinity, which was covered with loose stones. When there she waved her hand over her head, and came down the hill at the same rate at which she had ascended it. Nothing could be more dangerous than the ground over which she galloped ; but she appeared quite fearless, and seemed delighted at having the opportunity of vindicating the females of her tribe from the reproach of being like the ladies of cities.’¹

¹ *Bentley's Miscellany*, 1852.

CHAPTER V.

FAMOUS JOCKEYS.

A GOOD horse, if he is to figure to advantage, must have a good rider ; and what is more, the quadruped knows perfectly well the quality of the biped on his back. In the hands of an unskilful jockey the best horse that ever trod turf may fail to hold his own even in the company of second-raters, if the latter have the advantage of being piloted by clever horsemen. And the qualities which go to the making of a first-rate jockey are far rarer than most people imagine. He must not only be possessed of great nerve and coolness—he must have a firm and graceful seat, fine hands, and above all must be a good judge of pace, able to calculate whether the horse he is riding can last the distance, up to what stage he will have to be nursed, and when to make the final effort. He must exercise his wits as well as his limbs. Besides, his duties are attended with considerable danger : his life and limbs are constantly in jeopardy, and the wasting process to which he must perpetually submit is not calculated

to strengthen either his muscles or his nerves. Taking all these things into consideration, it is not surprising that a first-rate jockey should be in great demand, and that large sums should be paid to secure his services. Moreover, so strong are the temptations to dishonesty that an owner of race-horses knows that the best, if not the only, way to secure the fidelity of a jockey is to pay him well.

But the life of a popular jockey is by no means 'all sunshine and forced strawberries;' it is, and has ever been, an arduous calling, as the following facts will show:

'With jockeys in high repute it is necessary to remain in "condition" from the middle of March till the end of October, though a week or a fortnight are quite sufficient time for a rider to reduce himself from his natural weight to sometimes a stone or a stone and a half below it. An inquiry into this subject was made by Sir John Sinclair, and it was stated by Mr. Sandiver, a surgeon long resident at Newmarket, that John Arnull, when rider to the Prince of Wales, was desired to reduce himself as much as he could to enable him to ride a particular horse; in consequence of which he abstained from every kind of food, saving an apple occasionally, for the space of eight days, and declared himself not only uninjured, but in better wind, and altogether more fit to contend in a severe race, than before he commenced this unnatural course of diet.

‘When moderately reduced, through exercise taken in a suit of proper sweaters—say eight, or at most ten, miles’ brisk walk—repeated for two or three days, nothing can exceed the delicious sensation of health and elasticity which comes over a man, after being rubbed down with a coarse towel and fresh clothed for the remainder of the day. The effect is visible on the skin, which assumes a remarkably transparent hue, whilst after a repetition of such regimen condition follows every sweat, till the jockey becomes as sleek as the animal he is going to ride.

‘There was, I mind, a favourite sweating-ground with the Newmarket jocks, of about four miles out, kept by a “Mother Onion,” or some such name, whither a whole brigade of antique-visaged little gentlemen, carrying as much clothing as would suffice for many much taller personages, might be seen bathed in perspiration, either swinging their arms to-and-fro to increase the muscular action, and tramping after each other in single file on the foot-path bordering the high-road, or else encountered over the public-house fire, scraping the perspiration from their heads and faces with a horn carried for the purpose, precisely as a race-horse is scraped after a race. After resting thus for half an hour or so, and imbibing a tumbler of warm beverage to increase the sweat, they return at a good pace to Newmarket, perhaps to turn in for a short time and lie loaded with blankets, in addition to their load of sweaters,

when they finally strip and groom themselves carefully for the evening. Some men are bad wasters, when nothing but very severe exercise, aided by medicine and the most complete self-denial under every craving appeal for food, suffices to get off the last twenty-four ounces. Sam Chifney, Bill Scott, and Robinson were tall men by comparison with others of the fraternity, and consequently not so easy to reduce. But the season once concluded, few men are more convivial or hospitable than the jockey, when ample revenge is taken upon the sporting Lent they have conformed to so piously.’¹

One would almost imagine that such a severe course of training would sweat all the spirit out of a man or boy; but it does not, and the slim mannikins are always lively. One of the great events of every summer is a cricket-match between jockeys and gentlemen connected with the sporting press, and the display invariably made by the former proves that they have a good deal of energy left after all the severe and drastic process of reduction to which they have been subjected.

As an illustration of the mirth, fun, and good-humour which generally prevail among the fraternity of jockeys, we may give the following: ‘A laughable incident which took place at York many years ago, when the celebrated Buckle was in his palmy days.

¹ *The Bye-Lanes and Downs of England*, by Sylvanus.

At that time Mr. Rhodes was the clerk of the course, the starter, and the judge, and wore a very large and conspicuous bushy wig. Buckle, who was about to ride one of Colonel Mellish's horses, was behind time at the post, and kept the competitors, as well as the starter, waiting. On Buckle coming up mounted, Mr. Rhodes said, "Come, come; you're behind time again. This may do at Newmarket, Mr. Buckle, but it won't do at York!" Buckle, eyeing his wig, replied, "I say, old un, what do you ask for the wig? I've a bull-bitch at home about to pup—just the thing for her!" "Go!" said the starter, and off the horses rushed. Buckle was last, and turning his head, repeated, "What do you ask for the wig?" amid the laughter of the spectators and the chagrin of Rhodes, who proceeded to the judge's box. Buckle had the race in hand, and won it in fine style. As he was passing the post a winner, Buckle turned his head aside and repeated, "What do you ask for the wig, old un?" Rhodes never heard the last of this—it became a by-word in the streets.¹

But it is time to turn to some of the most famous jockeys, whose sayings and doings deserve to be rescued from oblivion; and first we will take the jockey just referred to, Francis Buckle.

This celebrated and accomplished horseman was the son of a saddler at Newmarket—which may

¹ *Turf Characters*, by Martingale.

account for his prowess in the pigskin—and began his career in the Honourable Richard Vernon's stables at a very early age. He rode the winners of five Derby, seven Oaks, and two St. Leger Stakes, besides, to use his own words, 'most of the good things at Newmarket.' But it was in 1802 that he so greatly distinguished himself at Epsom by taking long odds that he won both Derby and Oaks on what were considered very unlikely horses to win either. His Derby horse was the Duke of Grafton's Tyrant, with seven to one against him, beating Mr. Wilson's Young Eclipse, considered the best horse of his year. Young Eclipse made the play, and was opposed by Sir C. Bunbury's Orlando, who contested every inch of ground for the first mile. From Buckle's fine judgment of pace he was convinced they must both stop; so following and watching them with Tyrant, he came up and won, to the surprise of all who saw him, *with one of the worst horses that ever won a Derby*. Buckle, having made one of his two events safe, had then a fancy that Mr. Wastell's Scotia could win the Oaks if he were on her back, and he got permission to ride her. *She was beaten three times between Tattenham Corner and home*; but he got her up again in front, and won the race by a head. The Newmarket people declared they had never seen a race before snatched out of the fire, as it were, by fine riding.

Buckle's weight was favourable, being seldom

called upon to reduce himself, as he could ride seven stone eleven pounds with ease. He continued riding in public until past his sixty-fifth year, and his nerve was good even to the last, although, as might be expected, he was latterly shy of a crowd, and generally cast an eye to the state of the legs and feet when asked to ride a horse he did not know.

But it is not only in public but in private life that Buckle stood well. He was a kind father and husband, and a good master; and his acts of charity were conspicuous for a person in his situation of life, who might be said to have gotten all he possessed first by the sweat of his brow and then at the risk of his life. He was a great patron of the sock and buskin, and often bespoke plays for the night in country towns. He was a master of hounds, a breeder of greyhounds, fighting cocks, and bull-dogs, and always celebrated for his hacks. In the language of the stud-book, his first wife had no produce, but out of the second he had several children. We may suppose he chose her as he would a race-horse, for she was not only very handsome, but very good. He left three sons comfortably and respectably settled in life—one a solicitor, one a druggist, and the other a brewer. ‘Young Buckle was his nephew, and considered a fair jockey.’¹

No man experienced more than Buckle both the

¹ Nimrod, *The Chase, the Turf, and the Road*.

smiles and frowns of the blind goddess, and on more than one occasion he suffered the extreme of ill-luck. One of these untoward events took place at Lewes, where he had backed very heavily a horse of Mr. Durand's, but was subsequently retained to ride another in the same race. He mounted, and, highly to his credit and honour, he won. With little cash left, it now became a matter of moment with the honest jockey how to get back to Newmarket. In this dilemma, however, a gentleman offered a seat in his carriage. Off they went, and all things went smooth too, until they approached the last toll-bar near Newmarket, when the silver of the *conducteur* began to fail, and he applied to Buckle to pay the toll. The budget then must come out, and he confessed to this kind friend that, by the race in question, he had lost his all. Shortly after this they met a beggar, and to him Buckle threw his last shilling, exclaiming at the same time 'that he would never take *that* into Newmarket.'¹

Buckle was not only a skilful rider, but a remarkably good judge of a horse, as the following anecdote will show :

'The owner of *Violante* (a celebrated mare early in the present century), Lord Grosvenor, not thinking her worth training, had condemned her to be sold as a hack for as much as she would fetch.

¹ *New Sporting Magazine*, 1832.

Buckle, by chance, saw her, and, with that quick decision which so strongly marked his character, asked the groom her price. "Fifty, sir." "I'll have her," was the reply. The mare was accordingly in the very act of being led to Buckle's stable when her noble owner appeared. "Hallo!" addressing the groom, "who has bought that filly?" "Buckle, my lord." "Ho! Buckle bought her? She sha'n't go; there must be something more about her than we think; take her back." And back she went, but only to come forward as the best mare that ever ran in England. Although no explanation or acknowledgment ever followed this novel mode of being off, Buckle never grumbled.'¹

Indeed, he was one of the coolest men that ever mounted a horse, and to the fact that he never lost his composure may be attributed many of his victories. A jockey who loses his nerve at a critical moment in a race had better give up riding.

Buckle's chief competitor was Dennis Fitzpatrick, and against him some of Buckle's best riding was called forth. In the race between Hambletonian and Diamond for 3,000 guineas he is acknowledged to have displayed the most consummate skill, and to have won the race by manœuvring between the ditch and the turn of the lands, so as to have gained considerably upon his antagonist ere they pushed up

¹ *New Sporting Magazine*, 1832.

the hill. And, as a part of the events of that day, Buckle related the following anecdote: Sir Harry Vane Tempest had betted heavily on Hambletonian's winning, and, in proportion to the heavy sums in his book, his interest in the event had deepened, and his nerves became proportionably unsteady. In the deepest apprehension, and just as the horses arrived at the starting-post, he approached his jockey with his last orders, and to inquire yet once more his opinion as to the event of the race. It was then that the cool and unruffled demeanour of the man of nerve, confident in his own skill and resources, reassured the baronet, who exclaimed, as his own fevered hand touched that of Buckle, 'By G——, but I would give the whole stake to be half as calm as you!' ¹

Another famous rider of the past—long since dead, and forgotten save by very few—was William Arnall, who rode for most of the great sportsmen of his day at Newmarket, and was considered particularly to excel in matches. He was much afflicted with gout, but when well was a fine rider, and moreover as steady and honest as his father was before him. Being occasionally called upon to waste, he felt the inconvenience of his disorder, and the following anecdote is related of him: Meeting an itinerant piper towards the end of a long and painful

¹ *New Sporting Magazine*, 1832.

walk, 'Well, old boy,' said he, 'I have heard that music cheers the weary soldier; why should it not enliven the wasting jockey? Come, play a tune, and walk before me to Newmarket.'¹

The Chifneys were also renowned riders, though the scandal attaching to the Running Rein business (which will be hereafter spoken of) somewhat tarnished the lustre of the name. But, without doubt, the Chifneys, father and son, were splendid riders, as is shown by the following opinion of one who was no mean judge:

'The late Samuel Chifney presented the *beau idéal* of a jockey—elegance of seat, perfection of hand, judgment of pace all united, and power in his saddle beyond any man of his weight that yet sat in one. It is scarcely necessary to add that he was son of a celebrated jockey of the same name, consequently well bred to his profession. Chifney's method of finishing a race was the general theme of admiration on the Turf. "Suppose," says he, "a man has been carrying a stone too heavy to be pleasant in one hand, would he not find much ease by shifting it into the other? Thus, after a jockey has been riding over his horse's fore-legs for a couple of miles, must it not be a great relief to him when he sits back in his saddle, and, as it were, divides the weight more equally? But caution is required," he

¹ Nimrod, *The Chase, the Turf, and the Road*.

adds, "to preserve a due equilibrium, so as not to disturb the action of a tired horse." Without doubt this celebrated performer imbibed many excellent lessons from his father, but he has been considered the more powerful jockey of the two.'¹

Thomas Holcroft, author of the well-known comedy, *The Road to Ruin*, who flourished at the end of the last and the beginning of the present century, was in early life a stable-boy in the Newmarket training stables. It was in his time that 'sweepstakes' became fashionable, and in his *Memoirs* he speaks thus of such races :

' In addition to matches, plates, and other modes of adventure, that of "sweepstakes" had come into vogue; and the opportunity it gave to deep calculators to secure themselves from loss by hedging their bets greatly multiplied the bettors, and gave uncommon animation to the sweepstakes mode. In one of these the Hon. Richard Vernon had entered a colt, and as the prize to be obtained was great, the whole stable was on the alert. It was prophesied that the race would be a severe one; for although the horses had none of them run before, they were all of the highest breed—that is, their sires and dams were in the first list of fame. As was foreseen, the contest was indeed a severe one, for it could not be decided—it was a dead-heat; but our

¹ Nimrod, *The Chase, the Turf, and the Road*.

colt was by no means among the first. Yet so adroit was Captain Vernon in hedging his bets, that if one of the two colts that made it a dead-heat had beaten, our master would on that occasion have won ten thousand pounds ; as it was he lost nothing, nor would in any case have lost anything. In the language of the Turf, he stood ten thousand pounds to nothing !—a fact so extraordinary to ignorance and so splendid to poverty !’

Holcroft began betting next morning, and by the end of the week had lost half a year’s wages.¹

‘ In 1824, Robinson the jockey made a wager (in which he obtained good long odds) that he would in that year, and within the week, win the Derby and Oaks races, and also get married : all three somewhat problematical occurrences, the chances of success as regards the two first events being a matter determined by a mathematical calculation, and the latter, we presume, being almost reduced to a certainty by previous courtship. Of course the chances were in favour of those who laid odds, but on this occasion the odds were floored ; for Robinson won the Derby on Cedric, the Oaks on Cobweb, and his wife—no, what we mean to say is, and he also got married within the week.’²

William Scott, who died in October 1848, was another celebrated jockey, who, in his day, had no

¹ *Memoirs of Thomas Holcroft.*

² *Horse-Racing, its History, &c.*

superior and few equals, winning as he did no less than nine St. Legers, four Derbys, and three Oaks, besides innumerable smaller events. He rode nine winners for the Champagne Stakes, and six for the Great Two-year-olds at Doncaster. His Derby triumphs were on St. Giles, Mundig, Attila, and Cotherstone.

‘On the Monday prior to Cotherstone’s running for the Derby, Prince Albert rode over from Esher to Leatherhead to look at this rare specimen of a race-horse, and William was frequently heard to say that had the Prince known what he (William) and Cotherstone were going to do on the following Wednesday, he would have *made them both baronets!*

‘It is said of him in this race, when Sam Day was put upon Tom Tulloch, in order to make running for Iago, Sam made the pace terrific for the first mile; then finding his horse nearly out, he looked over his shoulder anxiously for a sight of the Pigburn horses, when Scott exclaimed, “Go along, you old buffer; it is Sir Tatton coming. None of the Pigburn division here yet.” Scott was commonly supposed to be a Yorkshireman, but as a matter of fact he was born at Chippenham in Wiltshire.’¹

¹ *Sporting Magazine*, 1848.

CHAPTER VI.

MILITARY STEEPLECHASING.

IN whatever part of the world British military officers are gathered together, there steeplechases or flat races, or perhaps both, are pretty sure to take place. The army has produced some fair amateur jockeys, and amongst them is—or, alas! was—Major H. A. Leveson, the ‘Old Shekarry,’ who thus describes a steeplechase in which he rode for a friend. The scene is Hyderabad, in the East Indies :

‘Moonlight was brought to my stables. He was a high-caste, dark-bay Arab, standing very little under fifteen hands, and had many good points, evincing great power and endurance; but his temper had been soured by ill-treatment, and my friend bought him at one-fifth of his value on account of his vicious tendencies. In fact, he had been turned out of a celebrated racing stable because George Smith, the jockey, had declared him to be dangerous, and would have nothing to do with him; and his character had become so notorious that Fred’s intended had forbidden his ever mounting him again.

Not being under petticoat government, I resolved to try his mettle at once, and ordered him to be saddled and led to the horse-artillery parade-ground, a large sandy plain, where I did not care for his bolting. I followed with Fred in his buggy, and on arrival at the ground had the girths drawn as tightly as possible, not merely to keep the saddle in its place, but to compress the lungs—a plan which I can recommend when riding an unbroken horse, as to a certain extent it prevents rearing and buck-jumping. When I first mounted he began all kinds of capers, and I was obliged to flog the wickedness out of him; then he tried all he knew to throw me, but finding his efforts in vain he bolted, and having a good plain before me, I allowed him his head, and gave him “such a gruelling” that in less than an hour he became perfectly passive in my hands, and we began to understand each other. I found him to have great bottom, and was altogether so pleased with his going that, in spite of his character, I made Fred an offer, which was accepted, and the horse became my own with half his engagements. I now devoted a good deal of my time to training and getting him into running condition. I had trenches dug and hurdles constructed in a quiet place behind the lines, where I could give him his gallops, and by the time of the races he was perfectly fit; whilst by dint of firm but kind treatment he had become thoroughly gentle and much improved in temper.

‘The momentous day at last arrived when I was to make my *début* in the pigskin as a steeplechase rider, and I must own the excitement was tremendous, although I tried hard to dissemble my feelings and appear cool. The race was to be run at five o’clock in the afternoon, as by that time the intense heat of the day had passed away, and the power of the sun’s rays was diminished. Soon after dawn I had Moonlight saddled, and rode him quietly over the ground, which described a large circle round the usual course, the last half-mile being a straight run-in past the stand. The distance was about three miles, and the fences would have been considered stiff even in Leicestershire, whilst the water-jumps were decidedly “yawners.” Moonlight cleared his fences like a deer, and his easy springy action and superb condition were all that I could have desired. After breakfast I went to a large marquee near the stand, where a good deal of gambling was going on, and found to my disgust that my horse was not even mentioned in the betting, as several well-known performers were entered. So little, indeed, was Moonlight thought of that the man who drew his number in the lottery the night before sold me his chance for a single gold mohr, which was only half the price of a ticket. However, I was not discouraged, and in spite of the sneers of the knowing ones, I backed my horse to win 5,000 rupees, easily getting 25 to 1.

‘Having paid considerable attention to my toilet,

and made sure that there was nothing in my get-up likely to invite criticism or betray greenness, I made my way to the weighing-room, where, without saddle and bridle, I pulled down very little over eight stone and a half, being only a couple of pounds over weight; for I received seven pounds, my horse never having run in a previous race, whilst winners had to carry seven pounds extra.

‘These arrangements were hardly settled when the bugle for saddling sounded, and, having seen to this myself, I mounted for the preliminary canter. As I rode slowly past the stand, in which all the beauty and aristocracy of the cantonment were assembled, a waving of handkerchiefs attracted my attention, and there were “the Nina” and her party arrayed in light blue (my colours), whilst another, who, in my opinion, was quite as fair, looked “unutterable things.” Moonlight was in the best of tempers, and, although a dark horse, attracted considerable attention, for his coat shone like velvet, showing his condition. His appearance was hailed with a shout by some of the soldiers who recognised me; and an Irish sergeant roared out, “Sure, it’s the little black captain that’ll show ’em the way entirely, for my month’s pay!”

‘After the preliminary canter we took our stations, and seven horses came to the post. I kept behind a short distance until I saw the others were ready, for I wished to keep Moonlight from becom-

ing excited by the company of other horses. The favourite was a magnificent chestnut Arab that had won several races, but he appeared fretful and impatient, and I remarked that his flanks were white with foam before we started. His rider sat him like a Centaur, and I knew if the race could be gained by horsemanship where to find the winner. The second favourite was a gray belonging to a well-known sportsman in the Civil Service, but his rider looked far too heavy, and I did not fear him. The horse that took my fancy was a flea-bitten gray belonging to a jemedar in the Nizam's service, and had his rider only nursed him properly he would have proved dangerous. An officer of irregular cavalry rode a celebrated hog-hunter, but he carried too much weight. As the horses walked up, the interest evinced was immense, and for a moment scarcely even the slight hum of the crowd could be heard. At last the word "Go!" was given, and we were away. The jemedar on the gray made the running, and the pace was severe to commence with, but I kept close to the chestnut, as I felt that he was the most dangerous. Moonlight was doing his work well, and I had only to sit steady and keep his head straight. The first and second fences were cleared by the whole field, but one swerved at the water and two fell in. The jemedar by this time was three or four lengths ahead, and at his girths rode the civilian. I still kept close to the favourite, who was going as if he

was conscious of what he had to do, whilst his rider's countenance was as calm and unmoved as if he was only taking a constitutional canter. We rode side by side, taking our jumps together, with our knees within a yard of each other, and for a mile there was hardly any perceptible difference in our horses' stride. Although the ground was rather broken, the pace was tremendous, and I knew could not long last. I therefore held in, and allowed the favourite to forge a little ahead; and although I felt my horse was full of running, I determined to nurse him. My anticipations were correct, for in a few strides I perceived the jemedar's horse was pumped, and the second favourite's heaving flanks and convulsive twitchings of the tail showed me his bolt was shot.

'The race now lay between the favourite and Moonlight, and so nearly were we matched that the slightest mistake on the part of either horse would have given the other the race. I had the advantage of a stone in weight, but that was counterbalanced by the superior riding of my adversary, who was the very *beau idéal* of a gentleman-rider. All at once I noticed that the captain held his horse more in hand, and allowed me to take the lead at the water-jump, behind which there was only one more fence of any consequence, and then a straight run-in past the stand. Could I but win! I felt almost wild with excitement, and giving my horse the spur for the first time during the race, I crammed him at the

water, which he cleared at a fly, and then pulled him together, so as to collect his stride before taking the last fence. On looking back I saw the chestnut evidently labouring hard, for, having jumped short at the water, the bank had given way beneath his hind-legs, and he was heavily shaken on landing. He scrambled out, however, very cleverly, and struggled on; with the expiring effort of a thoroughly game horse, he rose at the last fence, but nature was exhausted, his strength was spent, and he fell on landing; whilst Moonlight cleared it, and cantered in past the grand stand a winner, amidst deafening shouts and yells of delight from the soldiers who lined the course. The race was closely contested throughout, and at the last was so near a thing that the victor could hardly triumph or his antagonist feel mortified at the result. Had the favourite not met with the accident at the water I might have come off second best. It was, however, a red-letter day in my career, and my heart still glows with delight when I recall to mind my first steeplechase.¹

¹ *The Forest and the Field*, by the 'Old Shekarry.'

CHAPTER VII.

SOME FOREIGN JOCKEYS.

HORSE-RACING is now so well established in France that it is difficult to imagine that at the beginning of the present century it was almost unknown among our lively neighbours. Now the best English jockeys ride in the principal French races, and English horses run on French turf. French horses come over to England, and beat English ones, too; so that French turf matters have improved since the *New Sporting Magazine* gave the following description of two French jocks who rode in the Paris races, 1832:

‘René, the jockey on Conradin, and Baptiste, the rider of Cédéric, ought to be immortalised in the annals of horsemanship, for sure such a pair were never seen on any course before. The former was a long, lean, half-starved looking Frenchman, with sharp knees, who sat astride his horse like a pair of tongs; while the other—a great lusty hulk of a Norman, in a pair of mahogany-topped boots, great white cord breeches, lashed twice round his waist

with tape, if waist that could be called which differed in breadth nothing from his shoulders, and a queer-looking blue-and-black chequered shirt for a jacket ; a cap, with the peak turned behind, to match, and huge ruffles at his wrist—had his stirrup-leather so short that, although he might contrive to preserve his equilibrium, it was utterly impossible for him to render any assistance to his horse. . . . They all got away at the first wave of the hand of a gentleman in black, with a portly stomach encircled with a tri-coloured scarf. The Norman (who, by the way, had a wet sponge applied to his knees before starting, by way of improving his grip of the saddle) went off at score ; indeed, had the heats been once round we believe he must have won, for the five-year-old bay seemed to have a will of his own, and there being nothing but a plain snaffle in his mouth, he was left to the free enjoyment of it. The rider—for it would be a profanation of the name to call him a jockey—did not get a pull at him for the first mile and a quarter, and passed the stands at a slapping pace, which, however, shortly began to tell upon his horse, and he was compelled to resign the precedence to the gray (Lord H. Seymour's Eglé, ridden by Moss, or Mous, as the programme hath it) and Mouna, and take a place in the middle tier, where both rider and horse laboured away manfully long after the heat was decided. The gray won in a canter, Mouna was second, then, after a long interval, up galloped the

Norman flogging and spurring, and in about an equal space of time the rest arrived.’¹

Hungary and America too have sent horses capable of competing with the best British blood; but neither nation seems to have produced a breed of jockeys. The wild red man of the western prairies would perhaps, if he could be caught and tamed, prove formidable in the saddle.

‘The American Indian is an arrant jockey, and understands all the tricks of professional horse-racing as well as any veteran of Jerome Park. He rarely comes in competition with whites, because his passion being for trick races, he dislikes to come down to a fair and square race over a straight track. Besides this, it is really exceedingly difficult to hit on a fair distance between the Indian and American horse. The start being always from a halt, the small quick pony is almost sure to win at from 100 to 300 yards; while the long stride of the American horse is equally sure of carrying him in winner from 600 yards to two miles. A mile or two is then doubtful, after which it is safe to back the endurance of the pony.

‘A band of Comanches, under Mu-la-que-top, once camped near Fort Chadbourne in Texas, and were frequent visitors and great nuisances as beggars at that post. Some of the officers were decidedly

¹ *New Sporting Magazine*, 1832.

“horsey,” several owning blood horses, the relative speed of each being known, by separate trials, almost to a foot. Mu-la-que-top was bantered for a race, and, after several days of manœuvring, a match was made against the third best horse in the garrison, distance 400 yards.

‘The Indians betted robes and plunder of various kinds, to the value of sixty or seventy dollars, against money, flour, sugar, &c., to a like amount. At the appointed time all the Indians and most of the garrison were assembled at the track. The Indians showed a miserable sheep of a pony, with legs like churns, a three-inch coat of rough hair stuck out all over the body; and a general expression of neglect, helplessness, and patient suffering struck pity into the hearts of all beholders. The rider was a stalwart warrior of one hundred and seventy pounds, looking big and strong enough to carry the poor beast on his shoulders. He was armed with a huge club, with which, after the word was given, he belaboured the miserable animal from start to finish. To the astonishment of all the whites the Indian won by a neck.

‘Another race was proposed by the officers, and, after much “dickering,” accepted by the Indians, against the next best horse of the garrison. The bets were doubled, and in less than an hour the second race was won by the same pony, with the same apparent exertion, and with exactly the same result.

‘The officers, thoroughly disgusted, proposed a third race, and brought to the ground a magnificent Kentucky mare, of the true Lexington blood, and known to beat the best of the others at least 40 yards in 400. The Indians accepted the race, and not only doubled bets as before, but piled up everything they could raise, seemingly almost crazed with the excitement of their previous success. The riders mounted; the word was given. Throwing away his club, the Indian gave a whoop, at which the sheep-like pony pricked up his ears, and went away like the wind, almost two feet to the mare’s one. The last fifty yards of the course was run by the pony with the rider sitting face to his tail, making hideous grimaces, and beckoning to the rider of the mare to come on.

‘It afterwards transpired that it was a trick-and-straight-race pony, celebrated among all the tribes of the south, and that Mu-la-que-top had only just returned from a visit to the Kickapoos, in the Indian nation, whom he had easily cleaned out of 600 ponies.’¹

¹ *Hunting-grounds of the Great West*, by Lieut.-Colonel Dodge, U.S.A.

CHAPTER VIII.

HORSE-RACING : SOME OLD MATCHES, AND SOME
NEW DODGES.

THERE can be no doubt as to the great antiquity of horse-racing ; the Greeks and the Romans practised a form of the sport, and so did the ancient Egyptians, if reliance is to be placed on the pictorial representations of their every-day life which those peculiar people left behind them by way of history. The Arabs have always been ready to enter their horses in a race, and the Moors of Northern Africa were ever prepared to back their horses and their own horsemanship against all comers.

In the early period of Britain's history, when horsemen as a rule wore heavy suits of armour, the great object was to get a horse that could carry weight ; speed was quite a secondary consideration. But when gunpowder made defensive armour comparatively useless, men paid more attention to the speed of their animals, and horse-races became popular. Endurance also was necessary ; there were no half-mile races for baby horses in the time of the Tudor and Stuart monarchs.

It is hardly possible to say where the first regular race-meetings were established ; but ‘the good city of Lincoln’ was the first to erect a grand stand on its race-course. In Nichol’s *Progresses of James I.* we read that on Thursday, April 3, 1617, his Majesty was at Lincoln, ‘where there was a greate Horse-race on the heath for a Cupp, where his Majestie was present, and stode upon a Scaffold ye Cittie had caused to be set up, and withal caused ye race a quarter of a mile long to be raled and corded with rope and hoopes on both sides, whereby the people were kept out, and the horses that ronned were seen faire.’

Those who see the next Lincoln Handicap will do well to remember, therefore, that the corporation of Lincoln was the first to provide good accommodation on its racecourse, and they will doubtless feel grateful in the extreme to the predecessors of the present corporate body of the ancient city.

We are not informed what were the weights or distances in the Lincoln races just mentioned, but no doubt they were greater than in the present day, judging from the following :

‘In 1676 a race was run on Winchester Downs, “none but gentlemen to ride, four-mile heats ; fourteen stone was the weight up without the saddle, and fourteen stone two pounds and a half with.” And during the last century the majority of royal plates were given to six-year-old horses carrying

twelve stone; and the Duke of Rutland, owner of Bonny Black, the best mare of her day for a long distance, in 1719 challenged all the world "to run sixteen miles for one thousand pounds." This mare was by Black Harry by the Byerley Turk, out of a mare by a Persian stallion.'

The name of the individual who first formed the idea of 'making a book' is not on record, but very sharp practices have always characterised horse-racing. It seems as though man's wit had never been so actively employed as in devising how to win a horse-race, or how to win money while losing the race.

'At Newmarket, in the time of George I., a match was made between the notorious Tregonwell Frampton and Sir W. Strickland to run two horses over Newmarket for a considerable sum of money; and the betting was heavy between the north- and south-country sportsmen on the event. After Sir W. Strickland's horse had been a short time at Newmarket, Frampton's groom, with the knowledge of his master, endeavoured to induce the baronet's groom to have a private trial at the weights and distance of the match, and thus to make the race safe. Sir William's man had the honesty to inform his master of the proposal, when he ordered him to accept it, but to be sure to deceive the other by putting seven pounds more weight in the stuffing of his own saddle. *Frampton's groom had already*

done the same thing; and in the trial, Merlin, Sir William's horse, beat his opponent about a length. "Now," said Frampton to his satellite, "my fortune is made, and so is yours; if our horse can run so near Merlin with seven pounds extra, what will he do in the race?" The betting was immense. The south-country turfites, who had been let into the secret by Frampton, told those from the north that "they would bet them gold against Merlin while gold they had, and then they might sell their land." Both horses came well to the post, and of course the race came off like the trial.'

In the foregoing we have an instance of an honest jockey and a confiding employer; but owners of racehorses have not always shown the same amount of confidence.

'The notorious Duke of Queensberry possessed a racing-stud, not so numerous as some of those of his contemporaries on the turf, but he prided himself on the excellence of it. His principal rider was the famous Dick Goodison, in whose judgment he had much reliance. But, in the language of the turf, his Grace was "wide awake." Having on one occasion reason to know--the jockey, indeed, had honestly informed him of it--that a large sum of money was offered his man if he would lose, "Take it," said the Duke; "I will bear you harmless." When the horse came to the post, his Grace coolly observed, "This is a nice horse to ride; I think I'll

ride him myself; when throwing open his coat, he was found to be in racing attire, and mounting, won without a struggle.'

No doubt the bookmakers of that period often found their calculations upset; but, in the long-run, they probably had very much the best of the bargain, as they have now.

Old John Day used to tell a capital joke of once being victimised by 'gentlemen jocks' at Bath. 'In a field of a dozen horses, he had one that he knew to be so bad that he took the liberty of laying the odds to a fifty-pound note against him, at fifteen to one. It seemed the jocks had breakfasted together, and compared books (as became brethren of some "Union Club"), which showed that all the "cream" depended upon Honest John's horse coming in first; a result they of course readily accomplished, being men of *nous* and education. One bolting at the first favourable opportunity, with three or four after him; some fell off, others "pulled," till the self-"potted" Danebury nag came in nearly by himself, every one profusely congratulating his owner, who, besides the fifteen fifties, had the police to pay for the meeting, and ten dozen of champagne to the club for winning. Honest John's countenance, when seeing his gentleman jock weighed, must have been rather a legible index, and deeply instructive.'

The tout of the present day can exercise a great

influence upon the betting on or against a horse ; but the tout himself, sharp-witted and keen-eyed as he is, sometimes has to do with people quite as clever as himself. Of course, if the tout can afford to give liberal bribes to the stable-boys, and the latter are so dishonest as to reveal the secrets of the stables, the tout's work is pleasant and profitable ; but sometimes misfortunes overtake the gentleman whose business is to procure information.

‘The late Earl of Grosvenor had a horse heavily engaged in the Craven Meeting, and a few days before he was to run a report was circulated that he coughed. But whence the report? Why, a man had been hired by a party to lie all night on the roof of his box, to ascertain the fact which he proclaimed. His authority, however, being doubted, another worthy was procured to perform the same office on the following night, which, coming to the ears of the trainer, was immediately reported to his noble employer. “Have we no horse that coughs?” inquired his lordship. “We have one, my lord,” was the reply. “Then,” said his lordship, “let him be put in the box over which the fellow is to pass the night, and if he does not catch his death from this cold north-east wind and sleet we shall do very well. Of course the odds became heavy against the horse from the report of this second herald ; and his lordship pocketed a large sum by his horse, who won the race with ease.

‘Still later, indeed (the parties were alive in 1870—the one no other than Mr. Wilson, the oldest member of the Jockey Club; and the other a noble duke, then a noble viscount), a very fair advantage was taken of a report circulated by means of one of these watchers, vulgarly called “touters.” Mr. Wilson was about to try a two-year-old colt, and had entered his trial for the morrow. “We must not try to-morrow, sir,” said his trainer. “Why not?” inquired Mr. Wilson. “We shall be watched, sir,” replied the trainer; “and the old horse’s (*i.e.* the trial horse) white fore-leg will be sure to let out the cat.” “Leave that to me,” said Mr. Wilson; “I shall be at the stables before you get out with the horses.” And, coming prepared with materials for the purpose, he painted the white fore-leg of the old horse black, and the fellow one of the colt white; and so they went to the ground. The old one, as may be supposed, ran fastest and longest; but, being mistaken by the touter for the young one, his fame soon spread abroad, and he was sold the next day to the noble viscount for fifteen hundred guineas, being somewhere about eleven hundred more than he was worth.’

Even when horses are ‘run on the square’—when the animal, his rider, and his owner all act in a fair and straightforward way—the speculator on the event must not be too certain that the horse of his selection will win the great event; but when

owners and jockeys conspire, some one is sure to come to grief. There is an element of uncertainty in all worldly affairs, and it is a fact that the results of many races give even the law the 'go-by' in the glorious uncertainty they so forcibly illustrate. Some have been exquisitely ridiculous. 'I remember,' says a once popular sporting writer, 'one in particular that caused the greatest merriment at Chester. There was a good stake in one of the races at that very pleasant meeting, that required three horses to contend for it to make the money available. Two horses were ready, whose owners agreed to divide, and to pay the stake of the third, giving his owner a bonus at the same time to start his horse (some animal they thought nothing of), to fulfil the necessary conditions. Away they went, one of the confederates (old "Zohrab") very soon pulling up, leaving his coadjutor (Abraham Newland) to canter in and receive the money, as duly intended and arranged; when, lo and behold! the despised brute, running on velvet, collared him at the distance, ran as game as a bulldog, stride for stride, and beat him on the post, amidst the laughter and amusement of all acquainted with the circumstances.'

This was decidedly a dishonest affair, and the biters were most properly bitten. But sometimes it happens that the owner and trainer are unacquainted with the real merits of a horse until the jockey

develops them. For example: ‘The most extraordinary incidents in connection with the final issue of a race took place in the St. Leger in Theodore’s memorable year (1822). Theodore, at two years old, had run successfully; but he had been woefully defeated a few weeks previous to the decision of the St. Leger, a circumstance which appears not to have been viewed in its proper light. He had fallen in public estimation; and in proof of this it only need be mentioned that, on the morning of the race, a hundred guineas to a walking-stick of the value of one shilling was laid against him, and taken! This extraordinary transaction took place in the High Street, near the Ram Inn. Jackson, who had been appointed by Mr. Petre to ride Theodore, was sadly mortified at his own position and at his chance for the race. Indeed, he was very desirous of riding one of Mr. Gascoigne’s horses—either the colt or the filly; but he preferred the latter (Violet), and declared over and over again that he could win upon either one or the other. “Why, Jackson,” said one of his friends, “Theodore is a good horse, after all; he won’t stop in the race.” “No,” said the veteran jockey, “I know he won’t stop; but he has not strength, I am afraid, to go with Mr. Gascoigne’s horses.”

‘During the whole of the forenoon Jackson was extremely low-spirited, and had scarcely a word to throw at a dog, especially when he learnt the state

of the odds at the betting-room and the walking-stick affair, besides a current rumour that Mr. Petre had got rid of his betting-book, with a bonus, to Mr. Wyville; and at length he grew sullen and ill-tempered. As the time for the decision of the great event drew near he walked to the ground with his saddle at his back and his whip in his hand, in no very enviable frame of mind. He went to scale in due course; and immediately afterwards, on inquiring if any one had seen Mr. Petre, or his groom, or his horse, he was answered in the negative. He then proceeded to the rubbing-house, and made the same inquiries there. "Has any one seen Mr. Petre?" "No," was the reply. "Or his groom?" "No." "Or Theodore?" "No; they say he is not coming. 'Tis a hundred guineas to a walking-stick against him!" Jackson's teeth met in utter mortification. He then proceeded to the Town Field, where several of the St. Leger horses were being walked about. At length he discovered a horse at the far side of the field, near the hedge, led by a little stable-boy alone. Jackson thought it must be his horse Theodore. He trudged across the lands, and, approaching the boy, said to him, "Is that Mr. Petre's horse, my boy?" "Yes, sir," was the answer. "Bring him here," said the veteran, "and strip him directly,"—an operation which, with some assistance, was speedily accomplished. In the meanwhile Jackson proceeded to strip himself to

his riding-dress—black and pink sleeves—to adjust his saddle, surcingle, martingale, &c. The little boy assisted him to mount, and he recrossed the field in the direction of the course. When he was passing through the rubbing-house gate one gentleman said to another, “What horse is that?” “Mr. Petre’s Theodore,” was the reply. “What will you lay against him?” “A hundred guineas to one.” “Done.” “Done;” and the bet was booked. “Will you double it?” asked the taker. “No, no,” replied the other; “I think that is plenty for once.” Jackson heard this, and did not look very pleasant; in fact he was mortified and ill-tempered. But previous to this conversation he had let Theodore feel that he had his spurs on. Theodore, indeed, was all alive: he had done little in the way of exercise since his recent defeat, but was remarkably fresh, stared around him, and appeared ready and anxious for the struggle. Whilst parading in front of the grand stand, the objects of universal notice were the first favourites: Mr. Poulett’s Swap, Mr. Watt’s Mundane filly and Marion, Mr. Gascoigne’s colt, and Violet, &c., whilst Theodore was little noticed by any one. The horses approached the post in a compact body; and Jackson, who was always noted for getting a good place at starting, managed to advance in front. The word “Go!” was given, and away they rushed on the wings of the wind. Theodore almost immediately took the lead. The pace was then very fast.

Jackson was surprised at his own position and his own chance; and afterwards observed, in describing this extraordinary race, "When we got to the first cross-road I had lost all my ill-temper and mortification; I turned my head for a moment; a crowd of horses (twenty-two) were thundering close at my heels; the sight was terrific, the speed tremendous. Theodore pulled hard, but I held him tight. 'Now, my little fellow,' said I to myself, 'keep up this pace to the top of the hill, and I don't care a straw for the whole lot.' I felt as strong as a giant; I thought my arms were made of iron; and the blood rushed merrily through my veins, while my heart thumped at my ribs. Away we went at a rattling pace; I was first over the hill, and never was headed in any part of the race!"

'On reaching the top of the hill, however, Jackson turned his head to look for the first favourite, Swap; he was in the centre of the crowd. "You are done for," said he to himself; "I sha'n't be troubled with you!" On descending, he eased Theodore a little; but was instantly on the look-out for the other favourites, or, to use his own words, "the harlequins and the magpies"—that is, Mr. Watt's horses, ridden in harlequin jackets, and Mr. Gascoigne's, in black and white. Swap was completely defeated; and he had the greatest terror of Mr. Gascoigne's two, particularly Violet. Then came the tug of war. The favourites, after passing

the T.Y.C., a mile from home, challenged by turns or by twos. First, Marion, reaching his boots. Then Mr. Gascoigne's colt and filly, right and left, passing his boots and nearly reaching the neck of Theodore. Then the Mundane filly, with Marion. Then Gascoigne's two again; and here the skill, judgment, nerve, and resolution of Jackson were powerfully evinced. Theodore, perhaps partly frightened by the tremendous thunder at his heels—certainly sharing in the excitement of the struggle—still wanted to go farther ahead; but his rider contrived so to use his powers as not to waste them. Challenge after challenge was given, and challenge after challenge as often defeated. Jackson never permitted his horse to go much in advance of his formidable competitors. Holding him with a firm and judicious hand—but still going very fast—he only slackened rein when he was attempted to be coupled. "I could see," said the veteran jockey, "head after head advance as far as my boots on each side; and when I encouraged Theodore forwards, I could see head after head glide beautifully backwards out of my sight;" observing to himself (said he after the last bold attempt), "'Now I think you are all done!' I felt that the race was my own, and my heart beat merrily at the thought." Away they sailed; many changes taking place with the horses immediately behind Theodore, while Jackson had his eye on Violet. Nevertheless, he felt that the victory was his; and

as he approached home, his spirits were more exhilarated when he heard the mighty roar from the multitude of spectators, and the shouts from the grand stand — “Theodore — Theodore — Theodore wins!” “Petre—Mr. Petre wins!” “Jackson—Jackson!” — “Theodore!” — “Violet’s beat!” — “Theodore wins!” In approaching home, however, the Comus filly (Violet) came again, and made another challenge, looking more formidable. Jackson elevated his arm, prepared for the worst, as high as he could reach. He struck Theodore, and he bounded like a buck, and was landed a gallant winner by nearly a length—to the perfect astonishment of all the betting men and of Mr. Petre himself. The immense crowd of spectators honoured Jackson with three loud and enthusiastic cheers as he dismounted and approached the scales to be weighed. The extraordinary victory in this instance presented a most wonderful contrast to the bet of one hundred guineas to a walking-stick.’

In this race it will be noted that the horses started at the first attempt, and the jockey who steered the winner managed to make a good start. Had it been otherwise, had there been false starts and returns to the post, and all the worry attendant thereon, possibly the race might have had a different termination. A fair start is a desirable thing, and a ‘good start’ is a great advantage, which every jockey tries to secure; in fact, most of the false starts occurring on the English racecourses may be attributed to the

eagerness of the jockeys to get away, each striving to be half a second before the other competitors.

‘Nothing can possibly be more annoying, mortifying, and vexatious to the owners of race-horses than to witness a recurrence after recurrence of false starts. The animals become irritated, fretful, restive, and restless; the spirit and physical power which should have been rendered available during the race are wasted to a useless purpose. A striking proof of this occurred at the St. Leger in 1827. Twenty-six horses came to the post. Mr. Gully’s Mameluke was the favourite. By some means or other he got irritated, turned restive, plunged, reared, and tried every means to throw his rider Chifney, and then stood stock-still. At the *eighth* attempt—and many of them had gone three or four times to nearly the top of the hill—the great body of them got away; but Mameluke was left behind. The feelings of Mr. Gully, who was heavily hit on this occasion, may be readily imagined. Mameluke, however, set off himself, about *seventy yards behind* the leading horses. The extraordinary speed at which he was going may be imagined when it is stated that, on reaching the top of the hill, about three-quarters of a mile, he had passed upwards of twenty of his competitors with his violet jacket and white cap. On reaching the two-year-old starting-post—a mile from home—Matilda, who led the race, seemed on the point of being headed. At the Red House Mameluke fairly

caught her ; a dreadfully severe struggle then ensued. Matilda, who was ridden without spurs, by James Robinson, was next the ditch, and Mameluke on her right. He tried to pass her in so determined a manner that every muscle in his splendid frame was visible. On reaching the end of the white rails it was evident that he was in difficulty. “ He can’t do it ! He’s defeated ! He can’t do it ! ” was heard all around ; and “ Matilda ! Matilda ! ” was roared from the top of the grand stand. At the distance-post another strong effort was made to pass the mare, but she won the race by about a length, leaving the impression that, had Mameluke got off in the first instance, he would have been the victor easily.’

CHAPTER IX.

THE HUMOURS OF THE RACECOURSE.

THE history of our great race-meetings has never been satisfactorily written; and the interesting subject still awaits a pen worthy to do it justice. Scattered here and there in the pages of old books and magazines are many accounts of turf-gatherings which would prove entertaining to those specially interested in such matters. For instance, Nimrod has thus described the race for the Derby nearly a hundred years ago :

‘ Fancy twenty-four three-year colts, looking like six-year-old horses, with the bloom of condition on their coats, drawn up in a line at the starting-place, with the picked jockeys of all England on their backs, and on the simple fact of which may prove the best perhaps a million sterling depends. *They are off!* “No, no!” cried one jockey, whose horse turned his tail to the others just as the word “Go!” was given. It is sufficient, ’tis no start. “Come back!” roars the starter. Some are pulled up in a few hundred yards, others go twice as far. But

look at that chestnut colt—white jacket and black cap—with thousands depending on him! He is three parts of the way to Tattenham Corner before his rider can restrain him. Talk of agonising moments—the pangs of death! What can at all equal these? But there are no winnings without losings; and it is nuts to those who have backed him out. Who can say, indeed, but that, his temper being known, the false start may have been contrived to accommodate him? However, they are all back again at the post, and each rider endeavouring once more to be well placed. Observe the cautious John Day, how quietly he manœuvres to obtain an inside location for his worthy master, his Grace of Grafton. Look at neat little Arthur Pavis, patting his horse on the neck and sides, and admiring himself at the same time; but his breeches and boots are really good. Watch Sam Chifney minutely; but, first and foremost, his seat in the saddle,

“Incorpsed and demi-natured
With the brave beast;”

and his countenance—’tis calm, but thoughtful. But he has much to think of; he and his confederates have thousands on the race. Harry Robinson and Edwards are side by side, each heavily backed to win. How they are formed to ride! Surely Nature must mould a jockey for the purpose of displaying her jewel the horse. And that elegant

horseman, Sam Day—but see how he is wasted to bring himself to the weight. Observe the knuckles of his hands and the patellæ of his knees, how they appear almost breaking through the skin. But if he have left nearly half his frame in the sweaters, the remaining half is full of vigour; and we'll answer for it his horse don't find him wanting in the struggle. Then that slim young jockey, with his high cheek-bones and long neck, in the green jacket and orange cap—surely he must be in a *galloping* consumption. There is a pallid bloom on his sunken cheek, and he wants but the grave-clothes to complete the picture. Yet we need not fear; he is heart-whole and well; but having had short notice, has lost fifteen pounds in the last forty-eight hours. *They are off again!* A beautiful start, and a still more beautiful sight! All the hues of the rainbow in the colours of the riders and the complexions of their horses. What a spectacle for the sportsmen, who take their stand on the hill on the course to see the first part of the race, and to observe the places their favourites have gotten; they are all in a cluster, the jockeys glancing at each other's horses; for they cannot do more in such a crowd. They are soon, however, a little more at their ease; the severity of the ground and the rapidity of the pace throw the soft-hearted ones behind, and at Tattenham Corner there is room for observation. “I think I can win,” says Robinson to himself, “if I can but continue to

live with my horse; for I know I have the speed of all here. But I must take a strong pull down this hill; for we have not been coming over Newmarket flat." Pavis's horse is going sweetly, and the Yorkshireman, Scott, lying well up. But where is Chifney? O, like Christmas, he's coming, creeping up in his usual form, and getting the blind side of Harry Edwards! Chapple is here on a *Dangerous* horse, and John Day, with a strain of old Prunella. It is a terrible race! There are seven in front within the distance, and nothing else has a chance to win. The set-to begins; they are all good ones. Whips are at work—the people shout—hearts throb—ladies faint—the favourite is beat—white jacket with black cap wins.

'Now a phalanx of cavalry descend the hill towards the grand stand, with "Who has won?" in each man's mouth. "Hurrah!" cries one, "my fortune is made!" "I am a ruined man!" says another, pulling up with a jerk. "Scoundrel that I was to risk such a sum! O, how shall I face my poor wife and children? I'll blow my brains out!" But where is the owner of the winning horse? He is on the hill, on his coach-box; but he will not believe it till twice told. "Hurrah!" he exclaims, throwing his hat into the air. A gipsy hands it to him. It is in the air again, and the gipsy catches it, and half a sovereign besides, as she hands it to him once more. "Heaven bless your honour!"

says the dark lady. "Did I not tell your honour you could not lose?"

The same writer satirised the extravagant charges made by the inhabitants of towns where race-meetings are held. Had Nimrod lived to the present time he would have used even stronger language on this subject. Says he :

'Some years since a French gentleman visited Doncaster, and gave it the name of "the guinea meeting"—nothing without the guinea. "There was," said he, "the guinea for entering the rooms to hear the people bet. There was the guinea for my dinner at the hotel. There was the guinea for the stand for myself; and (*O, execrable!*) the guinea for the stand for my carriage. There was the guinea for my servant's bed, and (*ah, mon Dieu!*) *ten* guineas for my own, for only two nights!" Now, we cannot picture to ourselves monsieur at Doncaster a second time; but if his passion for the race should get the better of his prudence, we only trust he will not be so infamously robbed again.'

But they have learnt to charge now at Chantilly and other places on the Continent, so the wrongs monsieur suffered at Doncaster are avenged.

A Yankee generally considers himself the smartest man alive, but on the turf it sometimes happens that his smartness fails him. At least so it would seem from the following anecdote related by the late Lord William Lennox :

‘Many years ago, upon a certain spring meeting on the Plains of Abraham, near Quebec, a flyer from the United States was entered to run for a sweepstakes of ten dollars each, mile heats. The writer of this, then a youth of eighteen, had the care of two English horses, Wellington and Douro, good names to contend against the Eagle (for so the stranger’s horse was called), and received a challenge to run a match, weight for age, although, as the trainer said, “They were not particular to a pound or two.” The distances named were a mile, two miles, and three miles; the best of the three races to decide the event. As at this period no professional jockeys were allowed to ride for the Garrison Stakes, and as the owner of the bird of Jupiter did not fancy an amateur, the stewards permitted him to draw his horse without paying the forfeit, and I consented to contest against a regular Kentucky jockey for the sum of two hundred dollars, which was soon made up by my brother officers on the staff. Wellington had, unquestionably, the speed of his son, but he could not last so long. Under these circumstances I named Douro, who, though successful on many occasions in Canada, would have only been an average “plater” at home. The terms were drawn out, the money staked, the laws of Newmarket read out as our guide, and public expectation was on the tiptoe. The Eagle was a long leggy animal, drawn as fine as a grey-hound; his opponent a compact, well-shaped,

thorough-bred horse, in splendid condition, fit, as my groom said, to run for a man's life. The morning arrived—one of those bright lovely mornings that are to be met with on the sunny banks of the St. Lawrence, when the great orb shines brilliantly forth, when scarce a ripple is to be seen on the surface of the fast-flowing waters, when the sky is blue and cloudless, the sward green and refreshed by the heavy morning dew. An enormous crowd was assembled, for the horse had been sent purposely to “flog the Britishers.” There might be seen the “’cute hand” from New York, the “knowing one” from Albany, the “wide-awake” dealer from Boston; nor were the sharp fellows confined down to the United States, for we could boast of some who, as the saying goes, “knew a thing or two”—Montreal livery-stable keepers, Quebec blacklegs, grooms, and keepers. Among the distinguished classes were the Governor-General—for the seat of government at that time was at Quebec—his family, staff, civilians, and officers of the garrison. The betting was nearly equal, although occasionally a wild partisan offered odds on his favourite, which he felt sure could win. The race, which was looked upon as the event of the day, was to come off immediately after the Garrison Stakes, for which I rode, and won on Wellington—an omen, I thought, of good success. The bell then rang for saddling: I weighed to ride 10 st. 7 lb., and Douro, in a neat suit of clothes, was led up by a

dapper groom, his mane plaited, his feet plated. I mounted, proud to show myself off in a new orange silk jacket and black velvet cap, an unexceptionable pair of leathers and boots, and a handsomely-mounted whip, which I had been fortunate enough to win on a former occasion. What a contrast to my competitor! Eagle came out, rough and ready as a Shetland pony, with a soiled rug, his uncombed mane flowing wildly about, a saddle full of patches, a red surcingle, and led by a man decked out in an ill-shaped overcoat, a gaudy crimson shawl, and a pair of dark-coloured cord breeches, leaving a large hiatus between them and a low blucher boot. The jockey, who had proved the truth of his master's assertion of not being "particular to a pound or two," had jumped in and out of the scale, and was about to mount. Never shall I forget the impression produced upon my mind when I first caught a glimpse of my antagonist. His real name was William Pilling, although better known by the *sobriquet* of "Natchitoches Bill," he having won, as a youth, some great race at that southern meeting. His dress consisted of a pink cotton jacket, a pair of coarse trousers, which looked as if they had been made out of bed-ticking, very long steel persuaders, and a red bandanna handkerchief round his head. Some little time was lost before he got comfortably settled in the pigskin, for his reins had to be tied to his wrists—a practice, dangerous as it is, which

existed till very lately in America. The course was cleared, the signal given, and off we went at a pace that appeared to me awful. My orders were to wait, and I obeyed them implicitly. Just as we reached the last turn, and at the very moment when I felt that I could not live the pace, the Eagle bolted to the left, and, despite the giant grasp of the infuriated jockey, left me to win the race as I liked. All that my friend "Bill" had to do was to save his distance, which I permitted him to accomplish, feeling sure that, had I not done so, a wrangle would have ensued. Unquestionably I was wrong in throwing away a chance; my only excuse is that, to adopt the words of the Egyptian Queen, the Serpent of Old Nile, those were "my salad days, when I was green in judgment."

'The next event was even more exciting than the first, for I felt that I had to contend against a flyer who, if he only waited, must beat me into fits, and I was not a little cowed at hearing many who had backed me heavily hedging their money freely. In those days, however, my motto was "Never say die," and I took heart, and, cheered on by a few who stuck to me, mounted for the second race. Great, indeed, was my delight when the word "Off!" was given, and the flag lowered, to find that the Eagle flew, like Mazeppa's horse, "upon the pinions of the wind." The jockey had borrowed a regular break-jaw bridle, with the assistance of which he felt that no untoward

accident would occur ; and he was right in his surmise, as the straining animal kept within the limits of the post and rail. At the fatal turn the owner was posted on a pony, who joined his horse in a gallop for a few yards, until they got into straight running. During the first round it was, in the phraseology of the ring, Windsor Castle to an Irish bothie, Gibraltar to a martello tower, Niagara to a Parisian house-gutter, the prairie to Hampstead Heath, or any other comparison that may arise in the imaginative mind of the reader, in favour of my adversary. “He’ll never catch him ;” “The Yankee has taken the lead, and will keep it ;” “We’re done brown ;” “The Stars and Stripes have it easy.” Such were the expressions of the mob ; all seemed over except the paying and receiving of the stakes and bets. Could I have been transported to the corner of the grand stand, other and more cheering remarks would have greeted my ear, and consoled me for the shouts of derision that awaited me as I sat quite steady on my horse some yards behind my leader. “Douro will win !” exclaimed a gallant colonel, the confidential friend of the Governor-General. “The Eagle is gradually falling back ;” and such proved to be the case. Fearing to upset my horse, I found that, without increasing the pace, I was gradually getting nearer to the flyer. “Sit still and you will win !” shouted a well-known voice when we were about half a mile from home. This

injunction was followed to the letter, and every second brought the Eagle back to me. We approached the distance. "Bill" made a vigorous attempt to hustle his horse, but without avail. Arms and legs then began to work about like a semaphore telegraph, but the life had been pumped out of the over-ridden animal; my horse, too, had had quite enough of it; we were now neck and neck together. I made a feint, as if in greater difficulty than I was. This set my antagonist again to work, and, holding Douro well together, I landed him a winner with a rush, after—and very far after—the manner of Jem Robinson. The congratulations that welcomed me were most gratifying. The hero of Natchitoches bore his beating extremely well, his only remark to me, as we entered the weighing-tent, being, "You gammoned me nicely, captain, at the end; I thought that horse of yours, Ducrow, as they call him, was like an old bellows with a hole in it, but somehow or another there was one puff left. Come next fall to Kentucky, and give me my revenge." The following year the American horses proved more fortunate, both at Montreal and Quebec, thus recovering their lost laurels.'

And it may be added that more recently Mr. Lorillard has put English horses and jockeys to shame. However, as before said, the turf is a pursuit in which one must always be prepared for unexpected occurrences. Probably the French were not pre-

pared to be picked up as they were in the races which are now to be described. The sporting writer known as 'Old Calabar' appears to have once made a sporting trip to France with a friend ; the following is his account of a hurdle-race and steeplechase at St. Malo. Old Calabar asserts that the incidents are *true*.

'We found St. Malo a dirty town, so we took up our quarters at St. Servan, close by, at the Union Hotel, where we found several English and Irish gentlemen, and learned from them that the St. Malo races would take place in a few days ; that a hurdle-race and steeplechase were open ; and that we could enter our horses during the next two days. The races, we found on inquiry, were to be held on the sands.

"Hang it," said Debenham, "I don't know if the horses will run there, it is a style of thing they have never been accustomed to ; however, we will go and have a canter over them to-morrow morning. Dashed if I shouldn't like to take the shine out of Mossoo here ! But these chaps are up to a thing or two, not only here, but in the old country. My man shall sleep in the stable. I'm not going to have them nobbled ; and, my boy, if you will only attend to me, we'll commence winning here, 'skin the lamb,' if we can, and work our way through these country meetings. The devil's in it if we can't outride the Frenchman ; at any rate, we'll try."

‘We found our horses went pretty well on the sands, although they were heavy in places. We entered the nags that day, but, as we knew nothing of the cattle against us, could do little in the betting way. The day arrived for the races; and I shall never forget my horror at reading the “correct card.” They had not got our names rightly, which stood thus:

“Course des Haies (1000f.), &c. My Lord Hairy’s Saltsfisher (Anglaise); Mons. de Benham’s Topsail (Anglaise).”

‘Harry Millard had been turned into “My Lord Hairy;” and the title of nobility, “De Benham,” given to George Debenham. We were both in a great rage at our names being used in this way; but as we were assured it was all a mistake, we were fain to let the matter drop.

“I say, Harry,” observed my friend to me, “I see by the correct card that there are four others against us, and all going. Now, I have looked at the nags—not bad ones, but they want condition. If we cannot lick this lot I am a Dutchman. Your horse, my boy, is fast, but, like the rest, not in fettle, though he is better than the others. Mine is as hard as nails, fit to go for his life, and this ground suits him. The hurdle-race will only be a canter for them both, and, bar accidents, they will come out as fit as fiddles for to-morrow’s steeplechase. I see also that, in addition to the forty pounds for the

hurdles, a second prize, as they call it, is given in the shape of a tea-service: not that it is of much use to us, but still, as they say it is worth twenty pounds, we may as well have it, if possible. Now, what I propose is this: it is not the slightest consequence which of us wins; your horse is faster than mine for a mile; but, as this is over two, if the pace is at all good, his bolt will be shot about a mile from home, and when he dies away you may be certain the others will do so too, for they are as fat as bullocks. Now, you make the running at a strong pace, lead them over the hurdles at the devil of a bat, and cut the field down as quick as you can. I sha'n't be far off with Topsail, as they call him, and I shall sail by them quietly. If you can manage to beat me, do, and I will tell you why: I shall get seven pounds allowance for to-morrow, which will make it a certainty for me. Keep your weather-eye open, ride with nerve and cool as a cucumber."

'As the time was getting on we dressed ourselves in the approved fashion of gentlemen jocks. I was never more amused in my life than looking at the costumes of the French gentlemen-riders; they were ludicrous. One had on a pair of such cut breeches as it had never been my luck to look upon, and a pair of tops to his boots which would have knocked Bartley into a cocked-hat, for he never afterwards could have thought anything of those celebrated tops of his "wot will cut a shine in or over any country."

One showed a large amount of scarlet stocking between the boot and his breeches; whilst another, determined not to be outdone, displayed an equal quantity of loud blue and white. Of the caps and jackets I will say nothing; they were in perfect keeping with the boots and breeches. One gentleman in a splendid scarlet jacket was standing against the weighing-stand, with a bottle of smelling-salts to his nose; and on my asking him what was the matter—was he ill? he replied in pretty good English, “No, monsieur; but I feels an emotion—a leetle faints. Anglaish sportsmens are more use to de hurdles-race. Mon Dieu! but it will be runs fast to-day.”

‘At last we are mounted; the bell has rung for the last time; our preparatory canters have been taken, and we are in line. The polite Sous-Préfet is coming round to us, hat in hand, asking us to draw for our places, which we do, and change accordingly. Now all is in readiness. “Etes-vous prêts, messieurs?” shouts the starter, flag in hand. “Allez!”

‘We are off like a shot, I cutting out the running at a tremendous pace. My horse threw up the hard sand in a manner that could not have been very pleasant to those in the immediate vicinity. The pace was hot. I lift my horse at the first hurdle, and pop him over, and turn my head to see how it is with the others. All over safe; but one horse has

got the better of his rider, and is taking him down to the sea as fast as he can: it is my friend in the scarlet jacket. The rest are coming along close behind me, Debenham holding hard in the rear, Toprail (not Topsail, as in the card) pulling double. As I ease my horse, and steady him for the second jump, the Mossoo with the large amount of scarlet stocking rushes past me; over he goes, lands on his horse's ears, then again back on his tail, and finally finds himself in the pigskin again. During this little performance I had swept by him.

"Vous ne pouvez pas gagner, mon cher!" he shouts, as he rushes past me again.

"Nous verrons," I muttered, as I took another pull at my horse, and eased him again at the third hurdle. "No use trying to cut you down," I thought, as I saw him whipping and spurring away; "you'll do that yourself, my boy, and pretty soon too." He would have pumped a steam-engine.

'The turn is made for home. We run out a little, but the nags are righted and set going again. I now made the pace a rattler, as I found I could not shake off my French friend, who stuck like a leech to me. The first hurdle on returning is approached. I send Saltfish at it; over we go. I turn again, and there is my French friend close by me. Debenham has crept up to the third place; the blue-striped-stocking gentleman is whipping,

spurring, and screaming in the rear, like a Red Indian in his war-paint, with as much chance of coming up with us as he has of flying. The second hurdle is taken, my horse going well under me, and I am making but little use of him as yet. The third, and last, is close by us. I hear shouts from the crowd: "Blue wins, Blue wins!" "My God, he is killed!" "*Sacré!*" &c. I have no time to look to see what is the matter; Debenham is on my whip-hand.

"Send him along, old fellow," he says, "and make a race of it."

'I do so—catch my horse well by the head, sit back, and send the Latchfords home. Crack! crack! goes my whip; and I land Saltfish winner by a head.

'On returning to scale I ask what is the matter, and am told my poor French friend of the scarlet stockings is killed. This, however, happily is not the case; he had entirely pumped his horse, who swerved at the cords, and pitched his rider head-long amongst some carts. It was a wonder he was not killed on the spot; but he got off with a broken arm, and was quite senseless when taken up.

'In the evening, from the ball-room we wandered into that set apart for play, and there sat facing us, with a pile of gold pieces before him, no less a person than our American friend, Captain Willum,

the Yankee skipper we had met at Havre. He saw us on the instant.

“Hellow, Britishers, here we air again! I rather guess this old hoss has raised the dander of some of these gents. Banquo!” he bawled out, and again he swept a pile of gold towards him. “I calkerlate I’m in pretty tarnation tall luck to-night. You would not see me to-day; I could not get anighst you. But when I saw you bringing your hosses down the track at such a tarnation pace, and winning easy, I shies my hat up, and bawls out, ‘Go it, my Cockneys; you air a-winning like greased lightning! I knows them air Britishers,’ says I, ‘and they can ride like great guns.’”

‘Our appearance had the effect of making him leave the table, which he did, to the evident dissatisfaction of the others.

“I guess I ain’t a-going to play any more, strangers. There air a lot of chaps from Paris, and thought they wur a-going to clean this old coon out; but I guess I’ve wiped them off pretty slick this board. Let’s go to the grocery, and have a cobbler. And now I think of it, jist let me whisper a word in your ears afore you starts for that steeplechase to-morrow. Keep your mouths shut, and take a spare set of stirrup-leathers with you. There air a game going on that this old hoss hev got to the bottom of. Good-night, my Cockneys; and don’t forget to-morrow to look out for Captain Willum.”

‘The day broke bright and beautiful for the St. Malo Steeplechases, which were held at Paramé, a small bourg about a mile from the town. Debenham and myself went over early in the morning to look at the ground, which was about the roughest bit I had seen for some time. The course was to be officially shown by the stewards at twelve o’clock; but we thought it better to go by ourselves, and take a squint at the place.

‘After breakfast we ran over to St. Malo to see our friend Captain Willum, who was staying at the Hôtel de France. We found that worthy seated on one of the benches in front of the house, smoking an enormous cigar, and, as we had not much time to spare, we begged him to let us know at once about the stirrup-leathers, and what he meant about it.

“Look here, Britishers,” he said, “this old coon has knocked about a little, and I guess I am up to a few things. Now, you must know I can speak French just as well as I can my own language, which air the finest talk in creashun. Wall, I came down here after a charterparty for the vessel, and, knowing that these races were about to take place, thought I would have a cut in at the fun. I don’t let every one know I can speak French, and this time it has served me, and I hope it will you. Perhaps you don’t know that all the hosses you ran against yesterday, and most on ’em you will meet to-day, are trained by Englishmen. You ain’t got

an idea what a lot of these fellows come over here from your island. They gits warned off the course there for some little game—foul riding, nobbling, or something of that sort; then they puts an advertisement into one of your sporting papers, saying their lowest riding-weight is so much, and that they have no objection to go abroad—which is very kind and considerate of them, seeing they can git nothing to do at home. Some of these Frenchers hears of this, and gits 'em over. They'll only do for down in the country here; for they are too wide awake to hev such characters up around Paris, where I calculate the racing is pretty considerably different, and it takes a good hoss to whip 'em there. Nothing makes a Frencher—I mean these country fellows—more proud than to hev a *jockey Anglais*. The long and short of it is this: there are a lot of these blackguards here, and when you whipped 'em all yesterday, I heard some two or three say that if they could get at the saddles, they should jist give your stirrup-leathers a cut with a razor, and rub in a little strong oxalic acid. That's all I know; look to it. And now let's hev a liquor-up."

'We thanked our Yankee friend, and got back to St. Servan as quick as we could. We found the stables locked, but on looking at the saddles, which were in a room close by, we discovered that the stirrup-leathers of both had been finely cut.

"Don't say a word about this at present," said

Debenham; "it is a clumsily arranged thing, and does not matter a button, as I have two or three sets by me. Now let us go down to the Union, and have a pipe before we start."

'On entering the smoking-room we found a good many English gentlemen there, talking over the coming steeplechase—our chances, &c. One Irish gentleman told us he had lived at St. Servan for some years, and had been in the habit of attending most of the race-meetings about. "You will find," said he, "several English jocks up against you to-day, and some of them nice ruffians. They will try and ride you out, and are up to all sorts of dodges. If I were you I should mention this to the stewards, so that they may be on the *qui vive*."

"I'll do so," said Debenham significantly, "and you will hear a little more of these blackguards; but as you seem to know the tricks of these fellows, it will probably not surprise you. I can assure you we are much obliged for your friendly hint."

"May I ask," said one of the gentlemen to me, "why you call your horse Saltfish?"

"Why," interposed Debenham, "because he is a good one for a *fast day*. His first owner, a most capital sportsman, lived near Bath, and both he and Saltfish were well known. The horse was in those days a hard puller, and often took old B—— into grief. One day, so the story goes, though I will not vouch for the fact, he went slap into the hounds, and the

Marquis of W—— was exceedingly wroth. ‘Good God, Mr. B——,’ he exclaimed, ‘pray spare my hounds, and ride a little wide of the pack!’ Old B—— at the kill happened to be up first. ‘Bravo, B—— and Saltfish!’ some one exclaimed on coming up. ‘Damn Saltfish!’ exclaimed B—— pettishly, ‘I’ve changed his name.’ ‘Changed his name!’ they replied; ‘why, what the deuce do you call him now?’ ‘What do I call him?’ retorted B——, looking hard at the Marquis, who was a few paces off—‘what do I call him? Why, *Worcester Sauce*, to be sure!’ His love for a joke he could not let pass by. I bought Saltfish for Millard some two years ago, and a better or more honest animal never had a saddle put on him.”

‘At twelve o’clock we had a *voiture* at the door. The first steeplechase was for horses of the department. There were nine horses for this race, and four of them were ridden by Bretons. One of these curious-looking fellows was mounted on a nice spicy little nag; no saddle, only a bit of rug and an old roller on him. And the rider’s costume! A pair of the canvas trousers such as are worn by the countrymen, and enormous wooden *sabots*, with a nail sent into each heel to serve as a spur. The large hat had been taken off, and replaced with a handkerchief passed over his head and tied under his chin. The sporting public was much in favour of this horse and rider, and I was told confidentially he must win.

“Mon cher,” said one to me, “c’est un cavalier intrépide, effrayant. Il est sûr de gagner.”

“Wall, I calkerlate, Britishers,” said the Yankee, coming up, “this air an exhibition yer never seed before. It licks all creashun holler, this do. There they air, a-ringing up the play. We’ll just git by the stand, and see this amoosement.”

‘It certainly was a ludicrous sight. There were one or two Bretons nearly as bad off as our friend of the *sabots*, but they had saddles of some sort. Amongst them, mounted on a nice gray, was our blue-and-white-stocking friend of the day before; and as he stopped his horse to speak to us, he said:

“Ah, it’s a farce to let those Bretons go. I must win to-day. I have the best horse in the race.”

“I don’t know about that,” observed our friend the Irishman to us; “it is not likely he will. In the first place, these Bretons can ride, which Mossoo can’t. They will lick him, to a dead certainty.”

‘The bell for starting rings again, and away they streak, the Bretons going to the fore, and cutting out the pace. They are all in a cluster at the brook, which is the first jump.

“Bravo, Sabots!” Debenham shouts out, as the Breton, closely followed by the others, takes the water in splendid style. “Now, old Blue Stockings! By jingo, he is over all safe! Never mind the day-

light, old chap, cut away. Now look at them going at that post and rails; that's a floorer for some of them. By Jupiter! splendidly jumped!" he exclaimed, as the Sabots again sent his horse at the fence and cleared it. "That fellow can ride well; he wins, for a hundred!"

'I never saw better riding in my life than these Bretons showed us. They sent their horses along at a tremendous pace, and sat them well. They were now out of sight.

"Hang it, what a pity," remarked the Irishman, "we are not upon the hill-side! we could see it all. There's the bell ringing again; they are coming home. There they are; and, by the powers, Blue Stockings is leading the lot. Where the blazes is Sabots?"

'But Sabots was not far behind.

"Now, my boys, there they come at the big water-jump. Holy Moses! Blue Stockings is in it!" And so it was. His bolt was shot, and he was plunging in about seven feet of water.

"I hope that won't be our fate," said Debenham to me. "Look at Sabots again; there he comes—jumped like a bird. Hang me if all the Bretons are not together: it is a splendid race."

'On they came at a tremendous pace, whipping, spurring, and screaming out their "Hi, hi!" But Sabots is too much for them, and he lands his horse a winner by three lengths. The victor is weighed

out, a bunch of flowers is stuck in the horse's bridle, and he is led away.

"Now, Debenham," said I, taking my friend's arm, "it is our turn. There will be a jolly row over our affair, and, true to his word, here comes Captain Willum. Now, Captain, are you coming with us?"

"I rather guess I air a-coming with you," he replied; "this old hoss ain't a-going to leave you. I can explain all matters for you. Look at them low cusses a-larfing and giggling. I guess, my coons, you don't know your little game is up a tree. Don't try to play 'possum with me."

'On mentioning we had something to say to the stewards, we were politely invited to step up on the stand. Our friend came out well, and explained all to them. They seemed rather astonished, and ordered the saddles to be brought up. The horses were walked up, and the saddles taken off. They were soon satisfied as to the truth of our statement, and the culprits, being pointed out by our American friend, were immediately taken into custody by a couple of gendarmes. Fresh leathers were put in, and all in readiness. There were nine starters for this, and some five or six were ridden by Englishmen.

"Gentlemen," said one of the stewards, "we are watching you; mind there is no foul riding: I warn you."

"Never mind that old buffer," said one of the helpers to a jockey, who was leaning over his saddle,

listening to some instructions. "There's four on ye all right ; so ride 'em out, and bust 'em."

'I heard no more, for we were off.

'The steeplechase was like most others, with the usual amount of mishaps and falls. However, we got off pretty well, and managed, as my friend foretold, to "pull it off," running first and second. As to the other fellows riding us out, they never had a chance ; for we came away, and beat them as we liked in both heats.'

The French officers serving in Algeria have had chances of seeing a little more of horse-racing than falls to the lot of most of their countrymen ; for, as has been said, the Arabs are fond of horse-racing, and often practise the sport, though their notions of jockeyship differ from those prevailing at Epsom. A Derby Day with the Arabs has been humorously described by John Ormsby, Esq., of the Middle Temple in his book entitled *Autumn Rambles in North Africa*. 'Gathered together to witness the sport and make a harvest of the spectators were to be seen,' he tells us, 'the analogues of the Ethiopian serenader, the barrel-organ, the comic orator, and the other humorous features of our Derby Day. It must be confessed, however, that any comparison between our nigger melodist and the gentlemen who perform the corresponding services for the Bedouin sporting world would be very much to the disadvantage of the London Arab. Owing, perhaps, to the

fact that the Moslem mind has not a keen sense of humour, the performer is not a poor creature with a smudged face, limp white hat, and enormous shirt collar; but a grave, decorous, almost venerable—at any rate, highly picturesque—individual; and round him is a circle, from one to four deep, according to his merits, of cross-legged listeners, whose demeanour and attitude of respectful attention would make a street-preacher envious. . . . In nine cases out of ten the theme of the Arab lyrist is the “Sally of his Alley,” her attractions and his affection for her,—a subject which has been rather frequently treated of by lyrical poets. But the mode in which it is administered to a listening public is at least peculiar. The singer (generally a grave gray-bearded old fellow, who ought to know better than sing amatory ditties), ignoring his audience, and looking into his tambourine for encouragement, sings :

“Among the maidens of the tribe there’s none like little Sara.”

Here the flutes repeat the notes of the air—if air it can be called—while he beats time on the tambourine.

“She is the darling of my heart, and she dwells in the Sahara.”

Flutes and tambourine as before.

“Her mother is a skilful weaver of haïks,
Her father makes horseshoes for the warriors of the tribe.”

Flutes and tambourine again.

“But these persons are not really the parents of Sara.

I cannot believe it.

She is the darling of my heart, and she dwells in the Sahara.”

Here comes in a double allowance of flutes and tambourines ; and so on to the end, when he declares that as soon as Rhamadan is over, and he has money enough, he will marry Sara, and take her to his tent, but not in the Sahara.

‘ On the south side of Constantina rise the heights of Mansourah ; and beyond them is a great plain, watered by the Rummel, and crossed by the road to Batna and the Sahara. The racecourse was on this plain, and as the distance by path was half that by the road, we elected to go on foot. I think the appearance of the vehicles and their occupants fortified us in this determination. In either case we were sure of heat ; but heat in the open air is more endurable than heat in a box on wheels, by courtesy called an omnibus, plus dust and Arab society. For although the shore of “ Araby the blest ” may have once diffused Sabean odours of a refreshing sort, the property has not been transmitted to the garments of the children of Araby of the lower and middle classes, and they cannot be described as “ spicy ” in any sense of the word.

‘ The first view of the course on coming down on it from the Mansourah was very striking. On a racecourse in any other part of the world the great bulk of the spectators would have been on foot. Here, except a comparatively small knot of people about the grand stand, every one was on horseback. The course itself was in the form of a circle, about a mile

in circumference ; and it was hedged in everywhere, with scarcely even a gap, by mounted Arabs, each with his long gun slung over his shoulder or held upright before him. These were the goums, or fighting forces, of the tribes in the neighbourhood, a wild-looking set of warriors, to some extent in the French service. Mixed up with these, or galloping fussily about the plain, were the spahis, looking in their scarlet burnouses like fox-hunting Arabs at a meet. These form another military force, a highly organised and efficient body. Away to the left a great mass of red breeches indicated the presence of the irrepressible soldier, always conspicuous at a French ceremony, doubly so when the ceremony takes place in French Africa. The centre of the circle was evidently being kept sacred for some special persons or purpose, and was occupied by only a few soldiers and some dozen mounted Arabs. The grand stand was a creditable affair, all things considered ; at any rate, it had the great merit of offering shelter from the beams of an African sun, for which reason we sought its protection speedily.

‘According to the “correct card,” there was certainly no lack of excitement in store for us. Instead of the paltry four or five races that Mr. Dorling promises at Epsom, there were at least twenty. There were races for *poulains et pouliches*, colts and fillies, bred in the province, and for horses the property of heads of tents, and for horses of

European breeding, and for all comers, Arab or European, not to mention a race *à la haie*, or hurdle-race, to which I looked forward with great interest. Besides this, there was to be a *défilé des étalons* of the government stud, a march-past of the troops, and a grand fantasia by the goums. While studying the programme, there arose on the right a sound as if a lunatic piper, who had escaped from his keepers, was striking up the most insane piece in his *répertoire*. It was only the band of one of the goums, who thought to enliven the proceedings with a little music; and to that end played an air, which, like Arab music in general, was well calculated to make a man do something desperate. The effect of this on the knot of mounted Arabs opposite was precisely that which the untimely crow of a restless cock produces on his rival in a neighbouring yard. A stately old fellow, whom I had been respecting as a possible sheikh, or shereef, or something of that sort, owing to his imposing appearance, suddenly whipped a flageolet out of the hood of his burnous; his next neighbour disclosed a pair of small kettledrums; three or four more produced musical instruments in an equally unexpected manner; and the moment the opposition band had blown itself breathless, they crowed defiance to it in a tune that was, if possible, a trifle more exasperating. The contest was kept up with a great deal of spirit and pretty equal success during the day. . . .

‘Punctual to the announced time the commandant, superior officers of the garrison, and some of the civil authorities of Constantina rode across the course and took up their position opposite the stand. With them came a body of Arab grandes of sufficient importance to be admitted within the sacred circle : imposing figures in burnouses of every colour—white, black, blue, scarlet, puce—and some of them—magnates from the Sahara these—in enormous straw hats, three or four feet in diameter, covered with black ostrich feathers, and screening the head and shoulders as completely as an umbrella. Thanks to French organisation, there was no time lost in clearing the course—it had been kept clear the whole time : even the usual dog had not been allowed to set foot on it ; and immediately on the arrival of the great people the starters for the first race took their places at the post. They were five Arabs of the ordinary stamp ; four of them dappled or silver-gray, the fifth dark bay. To an eye accustomed to European horseflesh they would have looked, perhaps, at the first glance like a lot of screws ; but when you came to examine them closely you found undeniable points about them, and a look of gameness that showed it was at any rate no plebeian animal you had before you. If the horses were unlike what one sees on an English course, the riders were still more so. Most of them were bareheaded and barefooted, and had nothing on except a shirt

and a pair of short baggy trousers. One venerable-looking old fellow, however, sported a very fine plum-coloured silk waistcoat. At the word "Go!" off they went in a wild spluttering gallop, every one of them going his hardest, without an idea of holding, or nursing, or waiting, in a mad tangle of men and horses. But before they had got half-way round they were in Indian file, old Plum-colour leading by a good length, which he afterwards increased to two, coming in an easy winner. He seemed to be a kind of Arab Fordham or Wells, for he rode in about a dozen races that day. He certainly won six or seven. The moment the race was over, the next starters were put up, and so on with breathless rapidity, until at last we came to a race which I was particularly anxious to see—a race for all-comers, and I was curious to see how the Arab would come out against the European. As far as the issue went it was a very hollow affair. Three French horses started and two Arabs. But though the Arabs made all the running at first, they were soon collared and passed, and came in, one of them "nowhere," the other several lengths behind the last of the Frenchmen. In fact, the popular notion about the speed of the Arab courser is, I think, erroneous. Great speed is not his strong point; the chances are that on any ordinary racecourse the best Arab in the world would be beaten by a second-rate English racehorse. These Arabs were not, of course, first-rate

specimens of the race, but they were certainly not bad ones. A fortnight or so afterwards, when I was at Tebessa, the commandant showed me an English thoroughbred, which, he said, had easily run away from every Arab he had ever tried him against. But what was far more remarkable about this horse was that, once acclimatised, and accustomed to the hard life and hard fare of the Arab horses, he quite equalled them in hardiness and endurance, as had been proved in the course of many expeditions and tours of inspection among the tribes of the district.

‘The course *à la haie* was also open to all competitors, and here again the *indigènes* did not cover themselves with glory. The *haie* consisted simply of an obstruction about two feet high, and composed of rushes. The French horses knew what a sham it was, and brushed through it without taking the trouble of even going through the form of rising; but the Arabs were puzzled, and one—ridden, I think, by old Plum-colour—rose straight into the air, and descended on the obstacle as if out of a balloon, after which he demolished it. The *défilé des étalons*, which followed the last race, produced one or two magnificent animals, and several very commonplace ones; and then came the great event of the day—the fantasia by the goums.

‘In preparation for this the crowd of mounted Arabs concentrated itself gradually on one side of the course, and the swells withdrew from the centre

to leave the space clear. There was a pause for a moment, and then an Arab was seen to dash suddenly out of the crowd, and gallop madly across the open, standing high in his stirrups, his burnous fluttering in the breeze, and the gaudy shelil, or cloth with which on great occasions the Arab always covers the croup of his horse, streaming out like a banner behind him. When he reached the middle of the open space, still galloping furiously, he fired his long gun, and, waving it over his head, sped away over the plain as if his life depended on it. Then came another; then came three or four; then came a dozen, until at length the whole plain was alive with galloping, firing Bedouins. Then as soon as there was a strong body mustered on the opposite side, they began to gallop and fire in the reverse direction, and we fancied it was all over; but two or three enthusiasts would always break out, let fly, and communicate the infection to the rest.

‘In spite of the excellence of Arab horsemanship, the display was not free from accidents. First one poor fellow, apparently from his girth breaking, came to grief; then another got an ugly purl just in front of the stand, and was helped off the ground; but the worse case was that of an unfortunate fantasiast, whose horse made a mistake somehow in mid-career, and over and over rolled horse and rider in a horrible confused mass. After a struggle or two the horse kicked himself loose, and made off,

leaving on the middle of the plain a white motionless lump; but whether it was a man, or only *what had been a man*, that was carried past us, we were unable to ascertain.

‘This was not the only tragical incident of the day. As we were returning up the slopes of the Mansourah there was a sudden halt, and then a rush to a ravine on the left. We joined the crowd, and found the attraction was the dead body of an Arab. While we had been enjoying ourselves at the races there had been foul murder committed on the hill-side not a mile from us, and the blood was hardly dry on the stones which had been used to beat the victim’s brains out.’

The practice of horse-racing among the Patagonian Indians is thus described by George Chaworth Musters, Commander R.N., in his book, *At Home with the Patagonians*. Mr. Musters spent a long time with the big men, adopted their dress, spoke their language, and lived after their fashion.

‘The manner of racing is something similar to that in vogue among the Guachos in the provinces of Rio de la Plata, *except that it is generally conducted on principles of fair play*. The stakes are always deposited before the race comes off; if horses, they are tied out handy; if ornaments, bolas, weapons, &c., they are placed in a heap, the winners removing them directly the race is decided. The horses are run barebacked, the two riders starting themselves

after cantering side by side for a few yards. Owing to the great care taken in training horses, very few false starts occur. The races are very often for long distances, four miles or a league being the average, although of course with young horses the distance is shorter. The Indian method of breaking colts is similar to that of the Guachos; they are, however, more gentle with their horses, and consequently break them better.

CHAPTER X.

THE HUNTING-FIELD: ITS HEROES AND THEIR
EXPLOITS.

FOX-HUNTING is a sport peculiarly English. There is nothing like it anywhere else. The French, indeed, hunt the stag, the boar, and the wolf on horse-back with hounds, the huntsman being bound up in the coils of a brass instrument, which completely encircles his body, and from which he produces notes of encouragement to hounds and hunters. Grand, stately, and costly affairs were the hunts in which the late Emperor Napoleon and the Bourbon monarchs who preceded him indulged; but these were mere mockeries of sport compared with the exciting incidents of a good run with the Pytchley or the Quorn.

The hunting-field has always been a nursery of brave men. The most desperate and daring riders in the world have been bred there, and the object of this chapter is to chronicle the names and noted deeds of some of those worthies who well deserve to be styled the 'Heroes of the Hunting-field.'

First on the list is Assheton Smith, a man whose name and memory will be respected as long as fox-hunting flourishes in the British Isles.

‘Nimrod,’ speaking of the excellence of Thomas Assheton Smith as a horseman, says: ‘From the first day of the season to the last he was always the same man, the same desperate fellow over a country, and unquestionably possessing on every occasion and at every hour of the day the most bulldog-like nerve ever exhibited in the saddle. His motto was, “I’ll be with the hounds,” and all those who have seen him in the field must acknowledge he made no vain boast of his powers. His falls were countless; and no wonder, for he rode at places which he knew no horse could leap over. In addition to his powerful seat, his hand is equal to Chifney’s, and the advantage he experiences from it may be gleaned from the following expression: Being seen one day hunting his hounds on Radical, always a difficult, but at that time a more than commonly difficult, horse to ride, he was asked by a friend why he did not put a martingale on him, to give him more power over his mouth. His answer was cool and laconic: “Thank ye, but my left hand shall be my martingale.”’

From the same authority also come the following anecdotes of Assheton Smith and his parent:

‘Mr. Smith (the father of the Tedworth squire) once went on a visit to his son, then residing at Quorndon, and keeping the hounds. He was mounted

on a splendid horse belonging to "Tom Smith," as the old gentleman always called the young one, and they had a splendid burst over the cream of the country, with a whoop at the end. While Tom Smith was holding up the fox before throwing it to the hounds, Lord Alvanley observed, "How I wish your father had seen this finish!" "Depend upon it, he has," replied Tom Smith, without looking up; "and I advanced," related the old gentleman, who told the anecdote himself, "and made his lordship a bow."

"Was your father a good rider?" a neighbour once asked of the son. "He was what was *then* considered such," was the reply; "but on a very different principle to what I have adopted, and simply this—he clung on by his hands, and I by my legs." This is what he always termed his *gripe* on a horse.'

Old Squire Smith of Tedworth was still alive when his famous son established himself and pack first of all at Penton, near Andover. The old gentleman was strongly opposed to his son's leaving the grass country to establish a pack of hounds for the purpose of hunting the bleak downs and interminable copses of Hants and Wilts. For this reason, extraordinary as it may appear, he was the only landowner, when Tom Smith came in the year 1826 to reside at Penton, who refused his son permission to draw his coverts. 'Where does Tom Smith meet

next week?' said he one evening to a neighbour, when dining with him at Tedworth. 'I think,' was the guest's reply, 'that he will bring his hounds to Ashdown Copse on Monday.' 'Then if he does, I will bring an action against him, by Jove!' exclaimed the wrathful old squire. 'And pray, sir, what makes you smile, may I ask?' he added, observing his friend slightly amused at the threat; 'it is no joke, I promise you.' 'Excuse me, sir,' replied the guest, 'but I was thinking if Tom Smith were cast for damages, who would have to pay the bill.' The prohibition was withdrawn.

Assheton Smith would not allow himself to be beaten at anything. It of course often happened that there were men in the field who fancied themselves his equal in horsemanship and daring, but he generally contrived to ride away from them.

Mr. Smith was once riding his famous horse Radical in the Market Harborough country, when he observed, even while the hounds were drawing, a fellow, dressed like a horse-jockey at a fair, following close after him over every leap he took. On inquiry he ascertained that the said fellow was a horse-doctor, who had made a bet that his horse would jump anything that should be cleared by Radical. Matters went on pretty smoothly till they found, when the squire's rival for some time followed close, until they arrived at a hog-backed foot-style with a tremendous drop, and foot-steps into the road. This Radical cleared;

but his unfortunate follower's horse, striking the top bar with his knee, came headlong into the road with his rider, who was carried home senseless. The next day, as the squire was riding through the village, he was mobbed and hooted by the old women, as being the man who had nearly killed their hard-riding farrier.

This anecdote is not unlike that told of Burton, the Nuneaton tanner, who always made a dead set at Mr. Smith in a similar way. The tanner was habitually attired in a light-green coat, from which he received the name of the Paroquet, and he rode remarkably well. The squire at last, being determined to shake him off, sent Jack o' Lantern at an almost impracticable flight of stiff rails, the top bar of which he broke, and, to his dismay, made the passage easy for the tough man of hides, who was soon once more at his side, and was not destined to receive *his tanning*, at all events that time.

Of course such desperate horsemanship brought a fair share of accidents. In the words of a popular sporting author, 'Mr. Smith got a many falls. He always seemed to ride loose, quite by balance, not sticking with his knees very much. He always went slantways at his jumps; it is a capital plan. The horse gets his measure better—he can give himself more room. If you put his head straight it is measured for him; if you put him slantish he measures it for himself; you always see Mr. Greene

ride that way. He was first coming out when Mr. Smith was master, and he put him up to many a clever thing in riding. He had another dodge when he rode at timber; he always went slap at the post; he said it made the horse fancy he had more to do, and put more powder on.'

The spirit in which Mr. Smith rode to his hounds seemed to infuse itself into the bosoms of those who hunted with him, and after a time the Tedworth country became noted for hard and daring riders.

Although the country around Tedworth was mostly so open that an old woman on a broom might ride across it, still there were parts of it that showed off good riding, particularly in the Pewsey vale. On such occasions as these, when fine horsemanship was required, there was no man who rode better or straighter than Mr. John Rowden of Durrington, a wealthy yeoman, with a hand as light as a lady's, a heart as bold as a lion, and a frame fit to contend for the championship.

He was invariably selected by T. Assheton Smith to purchase his horses, generally at that time bought of Mr. Smart of Swindon; or in case any horse was heard of at a distance, Mr. Rowden was requested to pass his judgment on it, and many hundred miles has he ridden for that purpose. Nor did his labours end there; for if ever there happened, as was often the case, to be a violent fractious animal that required hand and temper, he was also requested to be

his private tutor; and so highly did the squire of Tedworth think of his riding and judgment, that he was often heard to say he would rather trust a young horse to Rowden than any man he knew.

‘I shall never forget his coming down a steep plantation on a violent bay horse that had broken away with him, crying, “Take ca-are, ge-entlemen, take ca-are; I don’t know whe-ere I am coming” (he had a little hitch in his speech), as his horse bounded through and over the young trees. “No,” said a farmer, “I don’t much think you do, for it appears to me you be out a bird’s-nesting.”’

On another occasion, when his horse reared up bolt on end, and there stood, he coolly remarked, ‘I suppose he will come down again once to-day.’

Orator Hunt was a bold rider, and, like Thomas Assheton Smith, well able to use his fists. Mr. Warde’s hounds were once drawing South Grove, when some remark of Mr. Hunt’s provoked a sneer from Tom Smith. Fierce words ensued on both sides, and they were in the very act of dismounting to settle it when fortunately a fox was halloed away, an attraction which neither could resist. ‘I always regretted this interruption,’ said an eye-witness of the scene, ‘for depend upon it this fight would have been well worth seeing, although Hunt had the advantage in weight and height; but for all that,’ he added, ‘I would have backed the squire.’

Every hunt has its finish; so has the career of

every hard-riding sportsman—a broken neck to one, a gradual decline from old age for another. The career of Thomas Assheton Smith was long and glorious, and its finish cannot be better described than in the account given by Sir J. E. E. Wilmot of ‘Assheton Smith’s Last Hunt’: ‘He had been very ill all the morning, and was threatened with one of his fainting attacks, when, looking up in agony into his wife’s face, he gasped out, “I am going.” Nevertheless, brandy, ether, and other stimulants revived him. About an hour after, the hounds arrived, Colonel Douglas Pennant’s beagles, and, much to the astonishment and dismay of all about him, he crawled, with the help of his valet and butler, to the hall-door, and was soon in the saddle. Once there he looked ten years younger. Observing a horse belonging to Colonel Pennant which he fancied, he dismounted from his own, and, though told the other was rather restive, he determined to mount it and follow the hounds. His groom had strict orders to keep very close to him with a vial of brandy in his pocket. Some anxious friends followed on foot, and from a piece of high ground watched his movements. They were soon terrified by seeing him thrown off. He was not hurt, and wished to continue the chase, saying “it was curious how he had lost his gripe on a horse,” which he always said was the secret of his riding; but at last was persuaded to return home in the carriage.

There is great reason to believe that stimulants prolonged his life, but his sufferings were very great.'

There was another Tom Smith who figured as M.F.H. besides the great Thomas Assheton Smith of Tedworth. This gentleman was born at Shaldon Lodge, near Alton, Hants, in 1790, and during his long career was twice master of the Hambledon Hounds, also master of the Craven and of the Pytchley. His biographer says of him (in *Sporting Incidents in the Life of another Tom Smith*): 'During his sporting career Mr. Smith has performed feats and met with adventures that probably no other man has equalled. And this is not my opinion alone. Mr. Nichol, who kept the New Forest Hounds, usually spoke of him as "the heaven-born huntsman;" and Mr. Codrington, who hunted the same pack, said, "Were I a fox, I would rather have a pack of hounds behind me than Tom Smith with a stick in his hand."' '

This remark conveys the idea that he was not only a good rider, but one who knew how to work his hounds, and how to keep them at their work. Fox-hunting does not consist of hard riding alone.

When 'another Tom Smith' left the Hambledon and went to hunt the Craven country, he was shown round the country by Mr. F. Villebois. They passed the wall of Elcot Park, which Mr. Villebois said was a great obstacle when hounds ran through the park. Mr. Smith pulled up, as if measuring the

height, which was six feet two inches ; and being seen to smile, he was told that it was impossible for a horse to jump it, neither was it necessary, as there were doors in different places. He said nothing then, but bore it in mind. It happened, however, in the second year of his mastership, the fox led the hounds through this park, and they followed through the holes left at the bottom of the wall for game to pass through. The horsemen made for a door, but found it locked. Mr. Smith, who was mounted on the General, rode at the wall ; but the horse ran his head up to it and then stopped short. He was then taken back about forty yards, and again put at it, and being well spurred, accompanied with a touch of the whip on the shoulder, he sprang over, to the surprise, and, indeed, horror, of the whole field, who thought it an act of madness. On reaching the ground the horse's forefeet gave way, and he came down on his chest, the rider's feet being dashed on the ground in a way that gave an awful shock ; but the horse rose with him on his back, and he kept his seat for a short time, but long enough to allow him to stop the hounds. The men in the meantime had forced the door ; when they reached him he was unconscious, but they held him on his horse till he got home, when he was bled and carried insensible to bed. In three weeks he was again in the saddle. This was certainly a most remarkable leap ; but Mr. Smith was afterwards far from being proud of it, and

condemned it as an act of wanton folly, which he would be sorry that any one should imitate.

“The other Tom Smith” was himself once hunted, and it happened in this way. He had purchased a new horse in London, and, as he wanted to be back in Hungerford as soon as possible, he determined to ride the horse part of the way home, his groom being told to come on by coach and take charge of it the next day. He had ridden nearly to Staines, when he fell in with a mob of London roughs, who had come out to see a prize-fight, and, having been baulked by the magistrates, were ripe for any kind of mischief. Two of these fellows were in a gig, whipping and galloping like mad; and when they came near him, though he had drawn up on the side of the road, they pulled the reins and attempted wantonly to drive over him. To save his leg, he struck at the horse’s head to turn it away; but the blow caught one of the vagabonds on the nose, and covered his face with blood. They were in the act of jumping out to seize him, when he put spurs to his horse and galloped off. The whole rabble rout—horse, foot, and drags of every description—gave chase, and it looked something very like a race for life. Finding his pursuers gain on him, he rode at a fence, but his horse fell at the ditch. The mob were almost on him ere he could force his horse over, and then many got into the field at a gate near the spot, and chased him with cries of “Stop thief!” and

choicer exclamations. Luckily the horse cleared the next hedge and ditch, which some of the fellows rode at, but only to fall head over heels. Mr. Smith rode off, laughing at them floundering in the mud, cleared the next fence into the road near Staines, and stopped at the inn to refresh both himself and his horse. Soon after the ostler came to say that the horse was very lame. Mr. Smith went to the stable, and then sent for a farrier, who pronounced the horse unsound, and pointed out the marks of its having been lately blistered on the lame leg. Mr. Smith sent the horse back to the dealer, stopped the cheque (which was dated forward) at the bank, and heard no more of the matter.'

Another worthy of the hunting - field, who flourished in the first half of the present century, was Squire Chute, who for many years hunted the Vine hounds. 'Nimrod' and other sporting authors have recorded some of the sayings and doing of this hunting hero.

'I remember the first day I was out with him (Squire Chute). "We are going cub-hunting to-morrow," said he to me; "will you come?" "Thank ye," said I; "I am not very fond of cub-hunting in September; it is only a pastime for you masters of hounds. Rushing through wet nut-bushes without seeing a hound, one's breeches all green, with leaves sticking to the buttons, one's horse half-mad from the flies, and the odds in favour of his being lamed,

does not suit my taste." However, I went to the place of meeting—a large cover of his own—and there I found the squire. "But what are you going to do with the spade?" said I, seeing one in his butler's hand; "you are not going to dig a fox, are you?" "Why, no," he replied; "but to tell you the truth, as the ditches are very blind and my butler is getting very fat, I thought he might as well walk after us with a spade, and then, if we come to an awkward place, he can throw the bank into the ditch in a minute, and we can walk through." He had a mortal aversion to a ditch, and on my once asking him why he did not hunt his woodlands oftener, he answered he did not like the deep ditches. "They tell me," said he, "my horses will not put their feet into them, but I can't help thinking they will, and that's the same thing."

The same writer records a little dispute between Squire Chute and one of his servants, arising from what the squire called 'a short answer.'

'The squire sent for me one morning, as he was often wont to do, and told me he wanted my assistance—sometimes he would say, "I want your advice," but in no one instance did he ever take it. Well, when I got there, "I want a whipper-in," said he. "Impossible!" said I; "you and John can never part." "Why, yes, I think we must," was his reply; "he is got rather short in his answers lately." Now, it so happened that I knew what one of these

short answers had been, so I could scarcely keep my countenance. It was this : A day or two before, the hounds had run their fox up to the palings of a park which the squire did not wish them to enter. John, however, being ignorant of this, was on his knees on the ground in the act of pulling out a pale, when his worthy old master came up. "Leave it alone, John," said he. "Come away, John; I tell you, I don't want them to go in there, John." But as every hound in the pack was at bay close to the said John's back, he might just as well have halloed to the pale itself; so, raising his hunting-whip (one of the old-fashioned sort, mind ye), he let the top of it drop on John's right ear, just peeping out from under his old buck cap. Now, on a cold morning in January, or indeed at any time, this was beyond a joke, and it must have been admitted to have been a *stinging* reproof to an old and faithful servant, doing what he thought was his duty to the hounds, and I question whether Job himself would not have murmured at it; at all events, it was beyond John's endurance, naturally a most civil fellow; so, turning sharp round, he exclaimed, "D——n your old eyes, I have a good mind to pull you off your horse!" It was indeed a short answer, as Mr. Chute said, and John lost his place in consequence. He afterwards went to live with a noble duke, who used to declare he couldn't bear the sight of him, he looked so like a rat-catcher!'

In this case the short answer did not have the effect of a soft one. The hunt-servants all over the country, as a rule, are civil and well-behaved fellows; but of course there are, were, and will be exceptions to the rule. Quite an exception was the whipper-in who rode behind Squire Leche's hounds.

‘Squire Leche, of Carden in Cheshire, was nearly the first gentleman who appeared in the character of huntsman to his own foxhounds, and a sorry hand he was. He had but one whipper-in, a drunken fellow of the name of Sam. “I’ll tell you what, Mr. Sam,” said he to him one day, on which he himself had left his hounds that he might not be too late for his dinner, “if ever you come home drunk with the hounds again, I’ll get a new whipper-in.” “Very well, sir,” replied Sam; “and perhaps if you was to look out for a *new huntsman* at the same time, it would be as well for the hounds.”’

Of renowned riders, who, without being masters of hounds, rode with any pack they could reach, England has produced hundreds, ay, thousands. The late Earl of Cardigan, the hero of the Balaclava charge, was a noted fox-hunter; so were many scores of other brave cavalry officers. Some of those who seemed effeminate dandies in the London parks were dashing sportsmen when behind the hounds. The Hon. Grantley Berkeley thus speaks of one:

‘No one went harder than the late Lord Alvanley, and no man caught more falls. One day he had

been hunting with me, and we ran over an unfortunate line of country, the stag setting his head for Isleworth, Twickenham, and Brentford. Lord Albanley left us before I had taken the deer, in good time to join his friends in the bay-window at White's. They asked him "What sport?" "Devilish good," he replied; "but the asparagus-beds went awfully heavy, and the glass all through was up to one's hocks. The only thing wanting was a landing-net; for the deer got into the Thames, and Berkeley had not the means to get him ashore. They say garden-stuff is riz since they saw us among 'em."

'Mr. Gunter, the renowned ice and pastrycook in Berkeley Square, who was always one of my field, was complimented by Lord Albanley on the appearance of his horse. "Yes, my lord," was the reply; "but he is so hot I can hardly ride him." "Why the devil don't you *ice* him, then, Mr. Gunter?" was the funny rejoinder.'

'Osbaldestone is a name dear to the lovers of fox-hunting. "The Squire," as he was called, is too well known, and his sporting feats are too familiar to every ear, to need any eulogium from our humble pen. But there was another Osbaldestone, whose name every lover of hunting should aid in rescuing from oblivion. With half a dozen children, as many couples of hounds, and two hunters, this Mr. Osbaldestone, clerk to an attorney, kept himself, family, and these dogs and horses, upon a salary of 60*l.* per

annum. This also was effected in London, without running into debt, and with always a good coat to his back. To explain this seeming impossibility, it should be observed that after the expiration of the office hours Mr. Osbaldestone acted as an accountant for the butchers of Clare Market, who paid him in offal, the choicest morsels of which he selected for himself and family, and with the rest he fed his hounds, which were kept in the garret. His horses were lodged in the cellar, and fed on grains from a neighbouring brewhouse, and on damaged corn with which he was supplied by a corn-chandler, whose books he kept in order. In the season he hunted, and by giving a hare now and then to the farmers over whose grounds he sported, he secured their good-will; and several gentlemen, struck by the extraordinary economy of his arrangements, winked at his going over their manors. He was the younger son of a gentleman of good family but small fortune in the north of England, and having imprudently married one of his father's servants, was turned out of doors with no other fortune than a hound big with pup, whose offspring from that time became a source of amusement to him.'¹

Of hunt servants known to fame, the following anecdotes are recorded :

'Bob Williams was whipper-in to the Duke of

¹ Blaine's *Encyclopædia of Rural Sports*.

Cleveland, but he commenced his sporting career as whipper-in to Sir Watkin Williams Wynn's harriers. I fancy I hear you say, "No doubt Bob was famously mounted in the stables of the great Welsh baronet!" Not he, indeed; Bob's stud would have averaged 40*l.* a head, being for the most part cat-legged, light-carcassed bits of blood, either turned out of the racing stable as good for nothing, or bought from some neighbouring farmer at the price above quoted. But Bob soon made them fencers, if he could make nothing else of them. On my asking him in Yorkshire how he had come off as to broken bones, &c., he thus answered me, and I know he spoke the truth: "I have broke three ribs on one side and two on the other, both collar-bones, and I have been scalped." I knew the horse that scalped him, by kicking him on the head after throwing him; but Bob's description of the accident was rich. "He tumbled me down as we were coming away with our fox," said he, "and kicked me on the head till the skin hung down all over my eyes and face; and do you know, sir, when I got to the doctor *I fainted from loss of blood.*" This last sentence was given in a tone indicative of its creating surprise that a whipper-in *could* faint. Bob conceived that fainting was the peculiar accomplishment of a lady.'

The riding of Dick Knight, huntsman to the Pytchley at the time Mr. Smith had the Quorn, was of the most daring character. 'An annual visitor

to Northamptonshire was in the habit of riding as close to Dick as he could, but was invariably beaten in a run. At the commencement of one season the gentleman was on a new horse, a clipper. He said to Knight, "You won't beat me to-day, Dick!" "Won't I, sir?" was the reply. "If you do, I'll give you the horse," said the gentleman. The one rode for the horse, the other for his honour. At last they came to an unjumpable place, which could only be crossed by going between the twin stems of a tree, barely wide enough to admit a horse. At it went Dick, throwing his legs across his horse's withers, and got through. The horse was sent to him next morning.'

A cool horseman was Jack Shirley, Mr. Smith's first whip in Leicestershire.

'He was riding Gadsby, a celebrated hunter of Mr. Smith's, but then a good deal the worse for wear, over one of the worst fields in all Leicestershire for a blown horse, between Tilton and Somerby, abounding with large ant-hills and deep holding furrows. "The old horse," said my informant, "was going along at a slapping pace, with his head quite loose, down-hill at the time, whilst Jack was in the act of putting a point of whipcord into his thong, having a large open clasp-knife between his teeth at the time."'

The hunting-field being open to all comers, of course eccentrics are sometimes found there, and

also persons who would seem to be disabled from riding. Of the latter class, 'Nimrod' says:

'What credit can be given to a long-legged gentleman on a two-hundred-guinea mare, if I produce another gentleman who rode nearly as hard, *with only one leg*, and on very queer cattle? Had I words and images at my command, I might awaken the sympathy of all sportsmen for the fate of a man who could follow hounds, having only one leg, a disabled shoulder, and who was obliged to let go his bridle when he leaped a fence to hold on by the saddle, being deprived of the natural clip from the thighs. But what will not a British seaman do? and such was Captain Pell, whom I saw with the Oakley hounds when I visited Lord Lynedoch. It appeared he hunted every day on which he could reach hounds, and I saw him take many good fences.'

A man who rides to hounds should possess a cheerful temper as well as skill in horsemanship. He should not be annoyed if a man, apparently not so well mounted as himself, rides in front of him, and at the same time he should be careful not to give annoyance to others. However, people do lose their tempers sometimes.

'I once had the misfortune to displease a first-rate performer on horseback by getting a good start with the hounds, which he did not. He came rattling after us at a tremendous pace to recover his place, as he considered it, as first man, and as we

had been going very fast for about three miles, over a stiffly enclosed country, his horse was blown in making up leeway ; and the first thing I saw of my furious friend was upon hearing a crash behind me, to behold him on his back in the field, with his horse's hind-legs in the ditch. I turned round and asked him if he was hurt. " Hurt ! " said he, " I am not often hurt." That was true enough, for no man had more falls than himself without being hurt. He was soon in the saddle, having held the rein in his hand, as most men who ride for a fall do. A brook being just then before us, he went down at it, a hundred miles an hour pace, with a sneering cheer to me—" Now, come along ; we are even again." I merely laughed at his ill-humour, and was soon over alongside of him. He then rode up-hill as hard as he could go at some stiff posts and rails. Crash went the top bar, and over rolled horse and rider together. I thanked him for letting me through so easily. He angrily replied that he was not yet beaten, and mounting again, charged a five-barred gate leading into a turnpike-road. This was a settler. His horse fell over, and threw the rider with great violence nearly across the road ; and this time he was really hurt, and obliged to confess it. Having waited to ascertain that no bones were broken, although he was most seriously bruised, I prevailed upon him to go quietly home.'

It is not always the man who makes the most

dashing appearance at the meet who proves the best performer across country. When the fox has gone away, and the hounds are streaming out of the covert to get on his trail, the most knowing ones and the best goers are soon to be distinguished from those who merely attend the meet to be admired. Concerning a man who really meant business, though he cared little for appearances while going to or from the meet, 'Nimrod' writes :

'Some years ago I was in the habit of occasionally meeting in the field with one of the best men over a country that England ever produced, by the humble title of "Mr. Morgan, hop-merchant, of London." On one occasion, and the first, I stumbled upon him in the most extraordinary manner, as the following tale will unfold. It chanced that I was at the turning out of a stag on the Ludlow racecourse one fine day in October, in honour of the burgesses' feast. A person appeared in the throng on such a wretchedly bad hack, and of so mean an appearance withal, that the person who collected the half-crowns declined handing him the glove. All that denoted the huntsman was a black velvet hunting-cap, his person being enveloped in a threadbare brown surtout, buttoned up to the throat. On the hounds being laid on the scent, however, the scene changed, and much after the fashion of a pantomime. On a signal being given, a countryman rode up to Mr. Morgan with his hunter; the threadbare coat was thrown upon

the ground, and the sportsman appeared in the most correct costume of the chase. But to be brief. We had a very excellent run; and the riding of Mr. Morgan, and the performance of his horse over a very difficult country, were the admiration of a few who could witness them—of which few I had the good luck to make one. But now for another change of the scene. “Who is this fine rider?” said one. “*Where can he come from?*” said another. “Will he sell his horse?” asked a third. By accident it was ascertained that it was the well-known Mr. Morgan; but he would *not* sell his horse, although two hundred guineas were offered for him. I should think the world never produced a more perfect hunter; and as a proof of his astonishing the natives, the gentleman who offered the two hundred guineas for him never before gave half that sum for a horse.

‘It afterwards transpired that Mr. Morgan was “incog.” for a short time in the neighbourhood, and, sportsman-like, was accompanied by his two favourite hunters, though he dispensed with the attendance of his groom.’

Quite another kind of sportsman was the hero of our next anecdote, though no one could have been a more enthusiastic lover of the sport of fox-hunting.

The sporting chimney-sweep was a well-known character with the Duke of Beaufort’s hounds some fifty years ago. A country newspaper of the period

gives the following description of his appearance at a fashionable meet :

‘On Saturday the favourite meet took place on the lawn in front of Badminton House, and, as usual, was quite a show day. There was a well-appointed field of three hundred, including last, though not least, our old friend “the hunting sweep,” who was received with warm congratulations by all present. He was mounted on his old chestnut horse, with a white face and long tail, a pad for a saddle, no stirrups, and a bridle with a new blue front—one of the distinguishing characteristics of the hunt. The sweep was in his sooty attire, a black jacket and trousers, with his brush for a whip. This was his first appearance for some time past, and he was asked why he had so long absented himself. “Why, gentlemen,” said he, “I will explain to you the cause. I have not hunted since the late Duke’s death. Peace to his memory! He was a duke every inch of him, and a great friend to me. He died just a year ago, and I have been in mourning ever since. I was so grieved at his loss that I had some idea of giving up hunting altogether; but folk speak so well of the present Duke that I thought I would come and pay my respects to him. Besides, I stood by him in days of yore, before he was a duke, and seconded his nomination for the county, and got him into the Parliament House too; and I daresay he has not forgotten me.” Just at this moment the Duke

appeared at the hall-door to greet his sporting friends, and the sweep immediately rode forward, received the congratulations of his Grace, and returned them by holding his brush horizontally in front of his hat, *à la militaire*. This movement brought all the ladies and other inmates in the house to the windows, whereupon the sweep jumped up on his nag, and stood erect upon one leg, extending the other in the air, holding the reins in one hand, and holding out the other like a flying Mercury. He then showed his skill in horsemanship by galloping round the circle in this attitude, amidst the waving of handkerchiefs, and to the infinite amusement of all present.'

Frenchmen are supposed to be not very partial to fox-hunting in the English fashion; however, some years ago, M. Alphonse Esquiros, a well-known French author, being in England, participated in the sport in a county 'whose name,' he says, 'I cannot give, for reasons which will be presently understood; it is one of those most celebrated for fox-hunting.' After describing the meet at the covert-side, the master of the hounds appears upon the scene, and the sport begins.

'At last appeared the squire; he was a man of about sixty, but still hale, and whose manners, at once noble and affable, announced the pleasure himself felt in affording pleasure to others. My friend the sportsman wished to introduce me to him. "He

is an eccentric," he said to me; "but he likes foreigners, and reads the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. He will give you a hearty reception." He, in fact, offered me his hand with that English frankness and cordiality which I prefer to all the ceremonies of politeness. After exchanging the usual greetings, and making a few of those jokes which only make the English laugh, the squire assumed the command of his army. At a sign and word addressed to the huntsman, the hounds, which had up to this time been checked by the authority of the lash, were sent into the covert. The scene, however, did not at all respond to the idea one forms of a covered spot; it was a quantity of fallow ground scarce covered by a bed of dry withered grass, on which asses and geese had doubtless been turned out to graze; it is true that at certain distances there rose in the midst of the plain clumps of shrubs, impenetrable brambles, compact tufts of thistles, and, lastly, forests of thorny broom, which grew to a certain height, though not sufficient to offer protection. It was among these shrubs. Hence the huntsman had given the signal to the hounds by shouting, "Hark in, hark in there, dogs!" exclamations which answer to our old hunting formula, *Harlou! Harlou! ici, mes bellots!* They were thus urged to keep their ears open and search.

'The covert at this moment presented an extraordinary spectacle. Every shrub and almost every

leaf shook as if it were animated by a mysterious spirit. We might say with the English that the whole dark heath was alive. This illusion is produced, as may be guessed, by the work of the dogs, who have become almost invisible, but who make the dead branches crack, the leaves rustle, and the very blades of grass stir. From time to time, however, they showed themselves, and their white coats, marked with black spots, formed a contrast with the colour of the dry stems and tawny shrubs. All the dogs were admirably patient, and glided into the narrowest passages: it is true that the huntsman guided them by signs, voice, and example. He called them all by name, and addressed them in a language quite new to me, but which appeared perfectly familiar to them. A profound silence prevailed among the hunters.

‘All at once a bark, hoarse as that of a dreaming dog, broke out from the centre of the brambles. To this challenge other canine voices replied like so many echoes, and were followed by more distinct accents. The barking—the last especially—proclaimed that the fox was found. The point was now to compel it to leave its entrenchments; this was a matter of several minutes. “Tally-ho! tally-ho! gone away!” (*Voi-le ci allé! s’en va, chiens, s’en va!*) the first whipper-in shouted, in a tone impossible to note; the huntsman blew his horn; the scattered dogs came together in a compact body; and all the

hunters, digging in their spurs, started at a wild gallop. Here, in fact, the run began.

‘There were shouts, a medley, a whirlwind of men, horses, and dogs dashing along with a fury that produced a dizziness. The pack especially proved itself admirable through its impetuosity, discipline, and courage. It was curious to see the laggard dogs regaining their place even under the horses’ hoofs, and frequently at the risk of being crushed. Soon, however, order was established—a perfect order—in spite of the impetuosity of the run. This order was slightly relaxed by the advice of the squire; but here another sort of difficulty presented itself. I had hoped that the fox would lead us across a fine plain which stretched out peacefully on our right. *In its malice* it carefully avoided doing so, and led us, on the contrary, to irregular ground, intersected at every instant by hedges, ditches, and brambles, where it expected to reach the skirt of a wood. These obstacles were cleared at one bound by the dogs, several of which, however, rolled on the top of each other at the bottom of a ditch: they were up again directly, though, and dashed on. Their example was valiantly followed by the horses and riders, who leaped like squirrels over all the fences. Any one unaccustomed to this exercise had a chance of breaking his neck every moment. Fortunately a few lads, induced by a chance of gain, opened the gates that divided the fields, in order to let the rear

guard of awkward riders pass. I at once ranged myself, I confess it, among the latter, for it was all I could do to keep my saddle on such ground, and while going at such a headlong pace. The horse my friend had lent me for the occasion was, to listen to him, as gentle as a lamb—it may be so; but it had too much the nature of the sheep of Panurge, for, seeing the others leap, it constantly wished to leap too.

‘I had, it is true, before my eyes, to encourage me, the example of a fat farmer, who, in spite of his weight, appeared to fear nothing. He bounded on his saddle in a fearful manner at each leap his horse attempted, and then, like a mountain upheaved by an earthquake, he invariably fell on his base. Though distanced by the vanguard of hunters, I followed the chase sufficiently close to notice the principal details. I saw the hounds run up a hill; their tongues, which floated in the breeze like red rags, announced at the same time fatigue, ardour, and a thirst for blood. All at once they stopped; the movement of their tails betrayed the anxiety of having lost the fox. The huntsman, after consulting the wind, slightly changed the direction of the pack, which brought it back towards me. At the moment when the men were leaping over the obstacles they had cleared just before, I distinctly saw in the distance one of the sportsmen fall from his horse while leaping a ditch, and as I did not see

him get up again there was reason to believe that he had received a serious injury. I told one of my neighbours of it, but he did not seem to hear me. The fox-hunting men do not stop for such trifles.

‘As the ground on which we now found ourselves was a large level plain, I gave more liberty to my horse, which started like an arrow, and rejoined the group of other horses, with which it seemed anxious to measure its strength. The country thus seen on the back of a galloping hunter assumes a singular aspect, with the large bare trees that pass before you like phantoms, the groups of gipsies calling to each other from the heights, and pointing out the direction of the fox; then every now and then a landlord running to the side of the road with a radiant face, as if he hoped that the fox would be killed in his neighbourhood (which would cause a demand for his ale and spirits), or else that one of the hunters would break a rib in the adjacent ravine—after all, as well there as elsewhere. His hopes passed away with the cavalcade.

“Forward! forward!” I heard shouted close to my ear; “the fox will be lucky this time if he escapes, for the dogs have him. Courage, hounds, courage!” The pack, in fact, seemed to redouble its vigour and resolution; it might be said that it felt the destruction of its foe. The hunters, on their side, pressed the flanks of their steeds, whips clacked, the horses perspired and panted, leaving

behind them in the sharp fresh air a cloud of smoke. Here the plain suddenly broke off, and I found myself facing a ruined wall, behind which there was a sort of orchard. The whole band of hunters had disappeared; still I heard a great noise of voices and the rustling of branches, whence I concluded that the horses had leaped in a twinkling over the ruined parts of the old wall. As I did not feel capable of such a feat, I sought a by-road to reach the scene of action. When I arrived the fox had just been killed by the dogs, and the death-cry of "Who-whoop!" was being raised on all sides.

'The huntsman had dismounted. After cutting off the brush, which is kept as an ornament, he raised above his head the corpse of the animal, which he held in both hands. At the sight of this trophy applause and shouts of joy broke out among the hunters, but it was very different with the dogs. Assembled in a circle round the huntsman, they made the air ring with the wildest barking. After balancing the fox, the huntsman hurled it among the dogs, who devoured it in an instant—every one wanted to have a share. The avidity which fox-hounds display for the flesh of an animal which belongs to their family (*canis vulpes*) is a matter of surprise to naturalists. Perhaps they resemble certain cannibals, who, without making man their ordinary food, find, after battle, a delicious taste in

the flesh of their enemy—the taste of vengeance. The war was now terminated ; the squire dismissed the farmers and a part of the hunters with a gesture of paternal authority which seemed to say, “Everybody has done his duty.”’

CHAPTER XI.

ADVENTURES WITH THE HOUNDS.

BOLDNESS is essential to good riding, and a really nervous man should never attempt fox-hunting. If he does not find every timid emotion banished by the voice of the hounds and the music of the horn, he is certainly out of place, and had better quietly ride home; for the man who speculates on the consequences of a leap is very apt to come to grief. But on the other hand, foolish recklessness is not to be advocated, and can only be excused in that man who knows that his life is of little value either to himself or others.

Some imagine that the object of fox-hunting is to ride as hard as possible, and leap all the most difficult fences that can be found; but the true sportsman, while he never refuses any obstacle it is necessary to cross, does not go out of his way to seek sensation leaps. In fact, he rides to hounds—does not head them, or gallop wildly through the pack, perhaps laming or killing some of the best of the dogs. Indeed, there have been hunting-men,

and good ones too, who seldom put their horses at a fence, and of such a one the following anecdote is related by a distinguished novelist, who also rode well to hounds :

‘There was an old Duke of Beaufort who was a keen and practical sportsman, a master of hounds, and a known Nimrod on the face of the earth ; but he was a man who hunted and never jumped. His experience was perfect, and he was always true to his resolution. Nothing ever tempted him to cross the smallest fence. He used to say of a neighbour of his who was not so constant, “Jones is an ass ! Look at him now ; there he is, and he can’t get out. Jones doesn’t like jumping, but he jumps a little, and I see him pounded every day. I never jump at all, and I am always free to go where I like.” The Duke was certainly right, and Jones was certainly wrong.’

Of course the huntsman and whips, having the care of the pack and the direction of the sport, cannot afford to be very particular, and have to go as straight as possible. One of these straight-goers was the Hon. Grantley Berkeley, who hunted his own staghounds, and has recorded many of his hunting experiences. Here is one—a case in point, as the lawyers say :

‘I purchased for one hundred and forty guineas a bay horse, Brutus, of Elmore, whose stables were then in Duke Street, Manchester Square. He was

not a very fast horse, but his extraordinary jumping and powers of endurance made up for it. He was as perfect at a brook as he was at timber or hedge and ditch, double and single, and I rode him over all the timber divisions of the Home Park at Windsor Castle, the stag and the hounds gaining an entrance over the river at Datchet, where a portion of the park wall had fallen down. Running round the park, after a very sharp run, I secured the stag with my whip under the walls of the Castle, the Prince Regent or his Majesty witnessing the conclusion of the run from the Castle windows.

‘Brutus had more than once set the field over park pales, and once by jumping the Brent, on the other side of which I stopped the hounds while the field went round, feeling no pleasure in riding to the hounds alone. Another remarkable jump made by him was over a gravel-pit on the powder-mill stream. It was the first day of the season, before advertising the meets, and I had a good many young hounds out, one of which hesitated to swim the stream. Knowing the fact that there ought to be nothing before me but a little bank and young quickset after I had ascended the bank of the river, I had therefore turned my head round to cheer the hounds across, when after his little spring over the young quick I felt my horse make a momentary pause, and an immense effort between my knees to get himself together. Turning

to see the cause of this, I found a large gravel-pit with two men at work in it, immediately beneath Brutus's fore-feet. There was no power of stopping and no room to turn; so with a touch of the spur and a lift I stimulated the amount of exertion to which the dear horse had already made up his mind, when, with a bound that I shall never cease to be thankful for, we flew over the danger and landed safe on the other side, with several feet to spare. I had jumped a yawner, but should have thought no more of it, if on my return I had not found the two men whose heads I had gone over waiting in the servants' hall with the string with which they of themselves had measured the leap. The pit from brink to brink was twenty-three feet wide; and standing with no vantage ground in his favour, my clever horse had cleared it considerably even with his hind feet.'

The celebrated Marquis of Waterford was a bold rider, and never refused any fence. An intimate friend of his writes :

'I remember once riding with him (the Marquis of Waterford) from Melton to John o' Gaunt's Gorse, where the hounds were to meet. His groom was mounted on a young horse, whose "manners," to adopt the language of West End horse-dealers, were evidently not very good.

' "Put him at that fence," said Waterford.

'The groom proceeded to obey orders, but with-

out that dash that was requisite with an unbroken animal.

“Try him once more,” continued the Marquis.

‘Again he refused, and the rider seemed as much scared as the steed.

“There, jump off,” said the noble owner. “I never ask a man to do what I would not do myself.”

‘In a second he was in the saddle. He paused not to have the stirrups lengthened, but patting the horse on the neck, he took him back some twenty yards, and went at the fence in good earnest, clearing it in sportsman-like style.

“Wait where you are,” he exclaimed to the groom; then turning the animal short round, again charged the fence, and, to adopt a Meltonian phrase, negotiated it in a first-rate style.’

The Marquis eventually lost his life through a fall from his horse. Another hunting hero who flourished about the same period as Lord Waterford was the hero of the following anecdote :

‘Fenton Scott of Woodhall was a remarkable man early in the present century—six feet four inches, very thin, very strong, very handsome, but had a club-foot, from an injury when a child. He began life in a dragoon regiment, and was not to be beaten over a country. Once, travelling down from London by the mail, whilst eating his breakfast at Grantham, he asked the waiter if the Belvoir hounds met near, and if he could hire a horse in the

town. The waiter said, "Yes, sir; certainly, sir." He gave up his place on the mail, hired a horse, and met the hounds. They had a capital run. Towards the end the field turned from hounds to avoid a well-known awkward place; Fenton Scott never turned; the hounds pulled down the fox. When the huntsman arrived he found this curious man sitting on a gate, the pads and brush cut off. "Who-whoop!" he cried, and chucked up the fox, handing the pads and nose to the huntsman, said, "Good run; hounds worked well;" got on his horse, and trotted off. The Duke, Lord Forester, &c., were anxious to know who this was, sent to Grantham, found that the Yorkshire gentleman had bought the horse, and gone on to the north by coach that afternoon.'

A bold rider and merely a hard rider are two very different people. The first, in a fair and sportsman-like way, shares the danger with his horse—in fact, risks both their lives and limbs together like an honest fellow; the other merely takes it out of his unfortunate horse where his own dearly and well-beloved neck is in no danger.

'I hate such a self-loving devil, though I value my neck as much as others, and think a boy of mine was not far out in an observation he made, something like the one made by Abernethy when a patient remarked that it gave him great pain to raise his arm: "What a fool you must be, then, to raise it!"' said he. My boy said nearly the same in effect. I

was hunting with Ward: this boy was on a five-year-old, quieting him to hounds. Will, the whip, was on a beast of a mare they called Long Jane, and long enough, high enough, and lanky enough Long Jane was; in short, as one of the machines for boys to practise gymnastics on, she would have been invaluable. Poor Will put her at a ditch, and in she went. "D——n thy eyes," says Will, "I knew thee would stumble in when I put thee at it." "Then what a d——n fool you must have been to have done it!" says the boy, who, by the bye, would ride at anything, the only difference being that he never thought he should fall, or rather his horse.'

A wonderful lover of sport must be the man who leaves his donkey and its burden in the road to follow hounds on foot, and a large-hearted sportsman is he who takes the footman up behind him; yet such a thing has happened.

'Mr. Russell, a famous M.F.H. in the west of England, was on one occasion running a fox hard in a wild and unfrequented part of his country, when on account of a strong wind and deep cover he had for a short time lost all sound of the pack. Suddenly he overtook a miller, who, having tied his donkey, with its sack of flour, to a hedge, was joining the chase and running for his life. "Have you seen or heard the hounds?" said Russell in a hurry. "Yes, sir," said the miller; "they're just afore, running like hell's bells; doan't ye hear 'em?"

“Jump up,” said Russell; “my horse shall carry us both as far as he can;” and he actually carried the miller behind him till the fox was killed. Mr. Russell would rather have one sportsman out with him than twenty fine gentlemen who put on the scarlet coat merely for the love of fashion.’

The love of hunting is not confined, as some imagine, to persons who have nothing else to do. Some of England’s most illustrious sons have taken delight in the sport. The late Duke of Wellington was a keen fox-hunter, and the late Lord Palmerston sometimes had a day with the Hambledon hounds. ‘His lordship was in the field one day when a fox was found at Bittern. Reynard ran to the water at Bursledon, but did not cross; instead he turned short back to Bittern, where he ran to earth with the hounds close to his brush. All the horses had had enough, and all the field left immediately except Lord Palmerston, who appeared anxious that the fox should be got out, saying that the hounds deserved to have him. He was told that it would be a long job, as the soil was sandy, and the fox could dig as fast as the men. “Never mind,” was the reply; “I will stay and help to the end.” All hands accordingly dug away as long as daylight lasted; then lanterns we regot, and at a *quarter to eleven* the fox was got at, after which Lord Palmerston had a ride of fourteen miles in the dark to Broadlands. The explanation of his anxiety was that his horse was

entered for the Hampshire Hunt Cup, to qualify for which it was necessary that he should have been in at the death of three foxes, and this made the third.'

No doubt Lord Palmerston then rode home quietly, not after the fashion of some gentlemen who perform all manner of pranks on the return from the chase. Larking after a good day's run with the hounds sometimes leads to unpleasant results.

'Some years ago (in 1830) a townsman of Doncaster went to meet the Badsworth hounds at Rossington toll-bar; they had a quick find, and a good run of twelve miles or so, ending with a kill at Thornwater side. And then, of course, the day's sport was over? Not a bit of it. At Hatfield there was another find—at the table of an open-hearted friend, and he went through the run again, with many a pull to freshen his memory. The best of stories and the best of friends must part, however, and at length came the hour when he must ride. By the favour of the Lady Moon he at once took a short cut for home, sailing away for some time without any mishap. An easy-looking post and rail was of course charged without a moment's hesitation, little dreaming what it led to. The drop on the other side was into an old unused stone quarry, half full of water, and some eighteen feet down! Strange

to say, the rider never lost his seat, while his old gray in his swim round came to a cart-track, by following which he brought his now sobered master to the turnpike-road. Neither of the adventurous pair were in the least hurt.'

CHAPTER XII.

COMICALITIES OF THE HUNTING-FIELD.

OF course fox-hunting, like every other pursuit (no pun intended), has its comic side. When two or three hundred men assemble there is sure to be some odd character in the midst of them, and his oddity is sure to be developed in the heat and excitement of the chase. The regular hands are, as a rule, very cool and business-like in their proceedings; but some of those who have not been trained to the sport from infancy sometimes show an awkwardness which proves amusing.

A gentleman, for instance, who has spent the best part of his life—say from seventeen to seven-and-forty—in a London office cannot be expected to turn out a very first-class fox-hunter when he retires from business to spend the balance of his life in the country; yet such men do occasionally take to hunting, and if they don't derive much amusement from it themselves, they are at least the cause of amusement in others. Concerning one of these gentlemen, the following anecdote was related a few years ago in a popular sporting periodical:

‘ A story comes from the shires anent a gentleman now very well known in the hunting world, but who took to the noble science rather late in life, and, with a certain praiseworthy idea of making up for lost time, rode accordingly. One of his first meets was with the A—— hounds, and, determining to choose a good leader, he followed old D., then the huntsman, and, ere the hounds had gone three fields, knocked the old man and his horse both down. He was overwhelmed with grief, apologised profusely, and gave D. a sovereign, the latter being perfectly satisfied. Both got up and renewed the chase ; but not very long afterwards the gentleman bowled over the huntsman again ; the same apology and another sovereign were produced, tendered, and accepted, old D. simply observing, “ Well, sir, I must say yours is a most *liberal* style of riding.” ’

Of the excuses made use of to cover mishaps there is no end. One of the best, however, was that invented by an old Cumberland farmer to explain his want of adhesiveness to the pigskin, and the tale finds place in another sporting publication in the following form :

‘ A facetious old fox-hunting farmer I knew in the North used to boast that he had followed hounds for fifty years, and never had a fall. Those who know Cumberland will agree with me that it requires a good fencer to get across it, as the land is principally enclosed by stones placed loose one upon another,

from four to six feet high. We had been running at a good pace nearly two hours, with only one check of about ten minutes, and the old boy's place was as near the tail of the hounds as he could possibly keep, when, pushing his horse a little too sharp at one of these walls, down they came both together. The old fellow not half an hour before had been chaffing a neighbour who had been in the same predicament, and, expecting a retort, slyly drew his knife out of his pocket, and when asked by his friend, who came to his assistance, whether he was hurt, replied, "Nought at all, bairn, nought at all; I only stooped to pick up my knife." And for years it was a by-word when any one had a fall, "What, have you dropped your knife?" However, the proverb says, "Any excuse is better than none."

The youngsters, as a rule, laugh at their own misfortunes as well as those that happen to others. *Punch* used to have splendid illustrations, by John Leech, of fox-hunting boys, and one of them must have been the youth next to be noticed:

‘During the recent Christmas holidays a school-boy was out with the North Pytchley, of which pack Fred Percival, of hereditary fame, is the efficient huntsman. Landing over an awkward fence, his horse made a nasty “peck,” shooting Fred out of the saddle; but, after frantic efforts, he struggled back into the pigskin. The youngster looking on laughed loud and long, upon which the huntsman

asked, "Are you jeering at me, sir?" "Of course," replied the boy. "Well, then, you keep your place, and I'll keep mine." "So I can," said the boy; "but I didn't know yours was *between your horse's ears*." That youth was evidently beginning to run alone.'

A well-mounted man who hunts regularly takes pride in keeping well up with the hounds. Sometimes little stratagems are used to gain or keep an advantage, the result being the reverse of pleasant to others. A noted practical joker in the hunting-field was the late Lord Forester, of whom several anecdotes have been handed down. Here are a few of them.

Lord Forester was well known in Leicestershire in the first half of the present century. "Nimrod" says of him :

'All who knew this celebrated sportsman also knew the natural gaiety of his disposition, and how fond he was of what is called a joke, particularly when he himself had the best of it. It may be expected, then, that the chances and disasters of a fox-chase frequently afforded him a theme. On one occasion, it is told of him that, having the lead in a quick thing, and no one else close on his heels, he came to a park paling which no horse could leap. His quick eye, however, espied a small bridle-gate, in which the park-keeper had left his key; so, popping through it quickly, his lordship turned the key

after him, put it in his pocket, and bade the field good-bye. On another occasion, when in the same enviable situation—*i.e.* having the lead—he leaped into a deep pit brimful of water. As he was in the act of swimming out of it, he observed a man on foot warning those who were following him of their danger. “Hold your tongue!” roared his lordship; “we shall have it full in a minute.” But did Lord Forester never press upon hounds? Now and then, I have reason to believe, which called forth the following rebuke of Mr. Meynell: “We had a pretty find to-day,” said he; “first came the fox, then Cecil Forester, *then my hounds.*” . . . His splendid hunter, Bernardo, I cannot forget, nor his leaping the immense space of ten yards and some inches with him over a brook, which space was measured by some of the party visiting at Belvoir Castle at the time.’

The sporting parson is a character not so often met in the hunting-field now as in days gone by. The hunting clergyman came in for a large share of abuse which, in very many cases, he did not deserve. The rector of a small country village can easily perform all the duties required of him by either law or gospel, and yet find time for healthful recreation in the shape of two or three hours’ gallop across country—a thing very good for both parson and horse. Of course a clergyman ought not to neglect his duties for the hunt, nor, for the matter of that,

should a doctor, a lawyer, or a merchant. It has happened more than once that those making complaint against a sporting parson have met with well-deserved, though unexpected, rebuke.

‘A well-known hunting poem, entitled “Billesdon Coplow,” was written by a clergyman who was frequently seen with two or three of the Midland packs, and the following anecdote is told of him: Some of his brethren of the cloth were showing him up, on account of his sporting propensities, to his diocesan, who was inclined to wink at a few failings which “leaned to virtue’s side,” and was satisfied with the merits of his otherwise irreproachable character. Amongst other enormities, they represented that Mr. — was actually going to ride a match at the county races. “Is he indeed?” said the amiable and good-humoured old bishop—“is he indeed? Then I will bet you half-a-crown he wins!”’

The farmers who ride to hounds are many of them keen sportsmen as well as bold riders. A man who has been brought up from boyhood among horses must be well accustomed to them, and horses certainly get well accustomed to some very marked peculiarities in their riders. Of one who used to hunt in Essex the following tale is told:

‘A farmer in Essex, well known some years ago in Lord Petre’s hunt, had a horse which was a remarkably clever jumper. I often tried to coax him out of the horse at a strong price. “No,” he would

say, "it is as much as my neck is worth to part with him." The fact was, the farmer was a most determined goer in the field, but a much harder one in a public-house, and frequently when it was so dark the horse could hardly see, and the master not at all, he used to start off across the fields; somehow he stuck on, and the horse went home as straight as a gunshot. I once saw him take a gate, with his master on the saddle, and his arms most lovingly round the horse's neck. I told him he would be found one night, horse and all, in one of the Essex ditches. "Nay," said he, "there is not a ditch in the country we were not in, the first year I had him; he knows them too well now to get in again."

The typical fox-hunter of the novelist is apt to be very unlike the real article, unless the novelist himself happens to be a hunting-man. Sometimes we find a good description of a real fox-hunter, who hunts for pure fun—such a one as the sporting writer, 'Sylvanus,' has portrayed in the following sketch :

'Accompany us, then, reader, to the abode of Joe Whitaker, Ramsdale House, on Nottingham Forest, or the Duke of Limbs, as he was commonly called from his immense size and strength. The Duke kept a stud of four-legged friends, under the guise of horseflesh, for his own and friends' especial riding; brutes seventeen hands high, rushing, hard-mouthed, vicious devils, that no man durst mount

but himself, were ever grinding corn at Ramsdale, and most courteously at the service of any tranquil gentleman staying in the house and desirous of seeing the meet.

‘My friend the Duke had long promised me a mount on any horse I chose to select out of his very amiable stud, premising that I should “go like a shot” on whichever I should be lucky enough to bestride myself. One evening, *after dinner*, I decided, in a reckless moment, to accompany him to Bunney Park, the seat of Lord Ranccliffe, to meet “the Quorn.” Hell-fire Jack and the Splasher were on the lawn when we cantered up on our hacks, with my old friend Will, the groom, in charge. After a hasty mouthful at one of the very best spread hunting breakfasts I ever saw, I slyly went out to reconnoitre the cavalry, leaving the Duke soaking his whiskers in a huge flagon of spiced ale, with roasted crabs and rosemary floating in it, flanked by a cold pork-pie, in which he had made an incision large enough to put even his hand out of sight.

‘I got quietly to the old groom, and, after putting on a very resolute forty minutes’ look, which, God help me, I little felt, I said, “Well, Will, it seems likely to be a fine day after all; which of these two animals would you advise me, now, as a stranger, to select, as his Grace is kind enough to let me take whichever I like?” Will scratched his head and gave the most extraordinary twitch with his mouth,

that denoted hilarity too hearty to be laughed at. He hid his face under the flap of the Splasher's saddle as he pretended to girth him up, and then said :

‘ “Why, his Grace *is* a kind gentleman, but, darn it, he has not left you much choice this time. Hell-fire Jack will run away with master hisself when he likes, and he, you know, sir, could pull that there tree up by the roots as easy as I could a stick of celery; and, as for the Splasher, why he's the devil ! ”

‘ This was true comfort for a man whose leg had been broken, only about a year before, “all to pash,” as Will said, and anything but a “bruiser” at the best. I was in a “fix,” as the Yankees say, but too game to show it. “I'll take the chestnut,” said I, “to be going on with, and if I can't manage him, I'll try the other.”

‘ “Why, burn my breeches,” said Will, “but you have a good heart, sir ! ” *Very !* thought I, and mounted.

‘ The Duke here made his appearance, licking his lips, and cracking his whip, to make his cursed brutes more wicked than ever, as I firmly believe. He also mounted, and set off at a gallop over the park, followed like anything mad by myself on Hell-fire Jack, till we got to the covert, where my troubles commenced in earnest. The horse I was on was, without the least exaggeration, fully sixteen-three, of

a fretful, wilful, spiteful temper as ever fiend was blest with; he would not stand still an instant, and was ever on the look-out for something to jump or some animal to kick at.

“D——n you, keep your own line,” was shouted at me by every one alike. I seemed the equal terror and amusement of the field, the Duke having made them pretty well aware of my position and the prowess to be looked for.

‘We found, and I thought my hour was come, “Give him his head!” roared his Grace; “he doesn’t pull an ounce, goes like a shot!” and, by the Lord Harry, I did go like a shot! The horse was a magnificent jumper, and no man breathing could help sitting him, he was such a complete master of his work; but, Lord, how he pulled! I was absolutely sick, the muscles of my arms came in lumps, my fingers closed hermetically, as the learned say, and, if we had not fortunately come to a check, I must have fallen to the ground from sheer fatigue. His Grace of Limbs was close alongside, looming like a clover-stack on fire. “Sweet nag, isn’t he,” remarked he.

“*Very!*” said I, dismounting. “Now for your promise, Duke; let us change.”

““With all my heart, old boy!” said he; “each is so good that I never know till I have tried both which I love best.”

‘After taking up about a dozen holes in the stirrup-

leathers in Mr. "Splasher's" saddle, I mounted that most heavenly quadruped. I have often thought since I must have been mad that morning. However, away we went over a vile, rotten, deep country, apparently intersected with tremendous fences—for a fixture they told me was "Cripple's Gorse" (true, though ominous). Here I became quite a character, and was approached by several of the Duke's friends, who politely complimented me on my mount.

"Splendid jumper!" said one.

"Swims like a shark," said another.

"Never was known to *refuse*," remarked a third.

"I'll lay you two glasses of ale at the next public," said my friend Hieover, "that he spills you at the first fence."

"Done!" said I, like a man (and a fool).

The Splasher was a delightful contrast to his stable companion from the infernal regions, being with hounds in covert as placid, tractable, and—curse him!—as deceitful as Mr. Calcraft, who does the last honours and loathsome of the Old Bailey! He ambled about with his head between his legs, though not pulling in the least, with one eye fixed constantly on yourself and the other on the look-out for a fence.

"D——n that hound; he's going to find!" I uttered, in agony to myself, as I heard a whimper in the gorse 'that sounded like gospel,' as Will Danby

expressed himself when he heard the Archbishop of York halloo away a fox, and prepared for martyrdom.

“Don’t point him at anything you particularly dislike, such as trees or houses,” said the Duke, rushing like a rocket at a double post and rail; “take at least a hundred yards to consider, or——”

‘I could hear no more, for I was within fifty yards of a rasping stake and bound fence, with a ditch like a canal on each side, at which the Splasher went at the rate of ten thousand miles an hour, head down, tail up. You might as well have pulled at the Great Britain with Fanny Ellsler’s garter! We crashed through, or over, I forget which, and then came to a full stop, the Splasher thinking he had finished the business after he had jumped the fence, and pitched me at least twenty yards clean over his head, amidst the roars of the Duke and a select party he had invited to see the fun.

“The nearest turnpike road to Nottingham?” said I to an interesting gentleman cutting turnips. “Please open that gate whilst I turn this brute’s head the other way, or he will take it at the posts without asking your leave or mine.”

‘You will agree that I have reason to be grateful that I was spared to write this, and so I am, but not more so than I shall be at seeing my good friend the Duke of Limbs once more, particularly as I hear he has changed his stud.’

CHAPTER XIII.

COLONIAL AND AMERICAN HORSEMEN.

JUST as Englishmen play cricket wherever turf can be found, and sometimes where turf is not, so they take their love of fox-hunting into far-off lands, and practise the sport when anything the least bit like a fox can be found. In India and at the Cape of Good Hope they hunt the jackal. Gibraltar has a fine pack of hounds supported by the officers of our garrison there, and Australia is a land of hunters. Bush-riding is no joke; the worst hunting country in England is pleasant compared with some of the half-broken land and wholly uncultivated bush of Australia. Nevertheless, the bush-farmer or settler rides merrily along, and crosses, quite as a matter of course, districts that would make an English hunting-man pull up and scratch his head in perplexity.

Anthony Trollope, the well-known novelist, had some reputation as a hunting man in England. A few years ago he paid a visit to Australia, and saw what hunting is according to the ideas of the colonist. Trollope's own words best describe the kind of entertainment he was called upon to take part in.

‘The following day there was a great hunt breakfast or luncheon, and the opening meet of the Melbourne staghounds. Of other sports I practically know nothing; in regard to hunting I have for many years been striving to do something. So much was known of me by certain kind friends; and I was therefore invited to the entertainment, and provided with a horse—as to which I was assured that, though he was small, he was up to any weight, could go for ever, and jump anything. The country would be very rough—so much was acknowledged—and the fences very big; but it was suggested to me that if I would only drink enough sherry I might see a good deal of the run. I thought of my weight, which is considerable; of my eyesight, which is imperfect; of my inexperience in regard to timber fences four feet six inches high, which up to that moment was complete; I thought also that my informant in respect to the little horse, though indubitably veracious in intention, might probably be mistaken in his information, never having ridden the horse himself. Wishing to return once more to England, so that I might publish my book, I resolved that discretion would be, on this occasion, the better part of valour, and that I would save my neck at the expense of the ill-opinion of the Melbourne hunting-field.

‘Such a hunt-banquet I never saw before. The spot was some eight or ten miles from Melbourne,

close upon the sea-shore, and with a railway station within a quarter of a mile. It was a magnificent day for a picnic, with a bright sun and a cool air, so that the temptations to come, over and beyond that of hunting, were great. About two hundred men were assembled in a tent pitched behind the house of the master of the festival, of whom perhaps a quarter were dressed in scarlet. Nothing could have been done better or in better taste. There was no speaking, no drinking, so to be called, but a violent clatter of knives and forks for about half an hour. At about two we were out on a common, smoking our cigars in front of the house, and remained there talking to the ladies in carriages till nearly three, when we started. I found the horse provided for me to be a stout, easily-ridden, well-bitted cob; but when I remembered what posts and rails were in this country I certainly thought that he was very small. No doubt discretion would be the better part of valour! With such a crowd of horses as I saw around me, there would probably be many discreet besides myself, so that I might attain decent obscurity amidst a multitude. I had not bedizened myself in a scarlet coat.

‘We were on a heath, and I calculated that there were present about two hundred and fifty horsemen. There was a fair sprinkling of ladies, and I was requested to observe one or two of them, as they would assuredly ride well. There is often a little mystery

about hunting, especially in the early part of the day, as all men know who ride to hounds at home. . . . I had been told that we were to hunt a dingo, or wild dog; and there was evidently an opinion that turning down a dingo—shaking him, I suppose, out of a bag—was good and genuine sport. We do not like bagged foxes at home; but I fancy that they are unpopular chiefly because they will never run. If a dingo will run, I do not see why he should not be turned down as well as a deer out of a cart. But on this occasion I heard whispers about a drag. The asseverations about the dingo were, however, louder than the whispers about a drag; and I went on believing the hounds would be put upon the trail of the animal. The huntsman was crabbed and uncommunicative. The master was soft as satin, but as impregnable as plate-armour. I asked no questions myself, knowing that time will unravel most things; but I heard questions asked the answers to which gave no information whatever. At last the hounds began to stir among the high heather, and were hunting something. I cared little what it was, if only there might be no posts and rails in that country. I like to go, but I don't like to break my neck; and between the two I was uncomfortable. The last fences I had seen were all wire, and I was sure that a drag would not be laid among them. But we had got clear of wire fences—wire all through from top to bottom—before we began. We seemed

to be on an open heath, riding round a swamp, without an obstacle in sight. As long as that lasted I could go with the best.

‘But it did not last. In some three minutes, having ridden about half a mile, I found myself approaching such an obstacle as in England would stop a whole field. It was not only the height but the obduracy of the wooden barrier, which seemed as though it were built against ever-rushing herds of wild bulls. At home we are not used to such fences, and therefore they are terrible to us. A four-foot-and-a-half wall a man with a good heart and a good horse will ride ; and the animal, if he knows what he is about, will strike it sometimes with fore as well as hind feet, and come down without any great exertion. But the post and rail in Australia should be taken with a clear flying leap. There are two alternatives if this be not done. If the horse and man be heavy enough, and the pace good enough, the top bar may be broken. It is generally about eight inches deep and four thick, is quite rough, and apparently new ; but, as on this occasion, I saw repeatedly, it may be broken, and when broken, the horse and rider go through unscathed, carried by their own impetus, as a candle may be fired through a deal board. The other chance is to fall—which event seemed to occur more often even than the smashing of the rail. Now I was especially warned that if I rode *slowly* at these fences, and fell, my

horse would certainly fall atop of me; whereas if I went fast I should assuredly be launched so far ahead that there would be room for my horse between me and the fence that had upset me. It was not a nice prospect for a man riding over sixteen stone!

‘But now had come the moment in which I must make up my mind. Half a dozen men were over the rail; half a dozen baulked it; two fell, escaping their own horses by judicious impetus. One gentleman got his horse half over, the four-quarters being on one side, and the hind on the other, so that the animal was hung up. A lady rode at it with spirit, but checked her horse with the curb, and he, rearing back, fell on her. Another lady took it in gallant style. For a moment it seemed as though the honour of all the hunting-fields in England were entrusted to my keeping, and I determined to dare greatly, let the penalty be what it might. With firm hands and legs, but with heart very low down, I crammed the little brute at the mountain of woodwork. As I did so I knew that he could not carry me over. Luckily he knew as much about it as I did, and made not the slightest attempt to rise with me. I don’t know that ever I felt so fond of a horse before.

‘At that moment an interesting individual, coming like a cannon-ball, crashed the top bar beside me, and I, finding the lady comfortably arranging her back hair with plenty of assistance, rode gallantly

over the second bar. For the next half-hour I took care always to go over second bars, waiting patiently till a top bar was broken. I had found my level, and was resolved to keep it. On one occasion I thought that a top bar never would be broken; and the cessation was unpleasant, as successful horsemen disappeared one after another. But I perceived that there was a regular company of second-bar men, so that as long as I could get over a rail three feet high I need not fear that I should be left alone. And hitherto the pace had not been quick enough to throw the second-bar men out of the hunt. But soon there came a real misfortune. There was a fence with only one bar, with only one apparent obstacle. I am blind as well as heavy, and I did not see the treacherous wire beneath. A heavy philanthropist, just before me, smashed the one, and I rode on at what I thought to be a free course. My little horse, seeing no more than I did, rushed upon the wire, and the two of us rolled over in ignominious dismay. The horse was quicker on his feet than I was, and liking the sport, joined it at once single-handed, while I was left alone and disconsolate. Men and horses, even the sound of men and horses, disappeared from me, and I found myself in solitude in a forest of gum-trees.

‘And in that wild country I might be wandering about for a week without seeing anything but a cockatoo or an Australian magpie. There does, however, always come some relief in these miseries. I

first encountered another horseless man, then a second companion in misery, and at last a groom with my own little nag. As for the run, that, as regarded me, was of course over; but I had legs beside my own to take me back twelve miles to the place at which I was stopping. As far as I could learn, they ran a drag for about seven miles, and then came upon a turned-down dingo.'

Fox-hunting, according to English ideas, has not made much way in the United States of America; yet many of the Americans are bold riders and keen hunters; therefore it will not be out of place to give the thoughts and ideas of a celebrated American on English fox-hunting:

'I am at Milton,' writes Charles Sumner, the American statesman, 'passing my Christmas week with Lord Fitzwilliam. Here I have been enjoying fox-hunting to the imminent danger of my neck and limbs. That they still remain intact is a miracle. I think I have never participated in anything more exciting than this exercise. After my arrival, I mounted, at half-past nine o'clock, a beautiful hunter, and rode with Lord Milton about six miles to the place of meeting. There were the hounds and huntsmen, and whippers-in, and about eighty horsemen—the nobility and gentry and clergy of the neighbourhood, all beautifully mounted, and the greater part in red coats, leather breeches, and white top-boots. The hounds were sent into the cover, and it was a

grand sight to see so many handsome dogs all of a size, and all washed before coming out, rushing into the underwood to start the fox. We did not get a scent immediately, and rode from cover to cover ; but soon the cry was raised—"Tally-ho!"—the horn was blown, the dogs barked, the horsemen rallied, the hounds scented their way through the cover on the trail of the fox, and then started in full run. I had originally intended only to ride to cover to see them throw off, and then make my way home, believing myself unequal to the probable run ; but the chase commenced, and I was in the midst of it, and, being excellently mounted, nearly at the head of it. Never did I see such a scamper, and never did it enter my head that horses could be pushed to such speed in such places. We dashed through and over bushes, leaping broad ditches, splashing in brooks and mud, and passing over fences as so many imaginary lines. My first fence I shall not readily forget. I was near Lord Milton, who was mounted on a thoroughbred horse. He cleared a fence before him. My horse pawed the ground and neighed. I gave him the rein, and he cleared the fence. As I was up in the air for one moment how I was startled to look down and see there was not only a fence *but a ditch!* He cleared the ditch too. I have said it was my first experiment. I lost my balance, was thrown to the very ears of the horse, but in some way or other contrived to work my way back to the saddle without

touching the ground. How I got back I cannot tell, but I did regain my seat, and my horse was at a run in a moment. All this you must understand took place in less time by far than it will take to read this account. One moment we were in a scamper through a ploughed field; another, over a beautiful pasture; and another, winding through the devious paths of a wood. I have said that I mounted at nine and a half o'clock. It wanted twenty minutes to five when I finally dismounted, not having been out of the saddle for more than thirty seconds during all this time, and then only to change my horse, taking a fresh one from a groom who was in attendance. During much of this time we were on a full run.

‘The next day had its incidents. The place of meeting was about fourteen miles from the house. Our horses were previously led thither by grooms, and we rode there in a carriage and four, with outriders, and took our horses fresh. This day I met with a fall. The country was very rough, and the fences often quite stiff and high. I rode among the foremost, and on going over a fence and a brook together, came to the ground. My horse cleared them both, and I cleared him, for I went directly over his head. Of course he started off, but was soon caught by Lord Milton and a parson, who had already made the leap successfully. The best and hardest rider in this part of the country is reputed to be a clergyman, and there was not a day that I

was out that I did not see three or four persons rejoicing in the style of "Reverend," and distinguishable from the rest of the *habitués* by wearing a black, instead of a red, coat. They were among the foremost in the field. Once we came to a very stiff rail fence; the hounds were not in full cry; there was a general stop to see how the different horses and riders would take it. Many were afraid, and several horses refused it. Soon, however, the Rev. Mr. Nash, a clergyman of some fifty years, came across the field, and the cry was raised: "Hurrah for Nash! Now for Nash!" I need not say he went over it easily. It was the Rev. Mr. Nash who caught my horse. None of the clergymen who were out were young men; they were all more than forty-five, if not fifty.

'Dinner was early because the sportsmen return fatigued, and without having tasted a morsel of food since an early breakfast. . . . We do not sit long at table, but return to the library, which opens into two or three drawing-rooms, and is itself used as the principal one, where we find the ladies already at their embroidery, and also coffee. Conversation goes on languidly. The boys are sleepy, and Lord Fitzwilliam is serious and melancholy; and very soon I am glad to kill off an hour or so by a game at cards. About eleven o'clock I am glad to retire to my chamber.'

CHAPTER XIV.

ANECDOTES OF HORSE-TAMING AND BREAKING.

A DESCRIPTION of the ordinary methods of horse-breaking would be out of place here. Those who know anything about it are aware that the best way of proceeding is to let the colt grow accustomed to be handled by man from his infancy, to treat him kindly, and teach him gradually, not punishing him if at first he does not understand what is required of him, or shows a desire to get rid of the burden on his back.

Most horses can be subdued by kindness, but there are some that seem regular born devils; no one can do anything with them except such men as Rarey, or his predecessor Dan Sullivan. These men had some subtle way of subduing the most violent brutes, which produced the most startling results, the most inveterate savages becoming mild as lambs after one or two interviews with the irresistible horse-tamer.

‘Dan Sullivan, who flourished early in the present century, was the first great horse-tamer of whom

there is any record in modern times. His triumph commenced by his purchasing for "an old song" a dragoon's horse at Mallow, which was so savage that he was obliged to be fed through a hole in the wall. After one of Sullivan's lessons, the trooper drew a car quietly through Mallow, and remained a very proverb of gentleness for years after. In fact, with mule or horse, one half-hour's lesson from Sullivan was enough, but the horses relapsed in other hands. Sullivan's own account of the secret was that he originally acquired it from a wearied soldier who had not money enough to pay for a pint of porter he had drunk. The landlord of the ale-house was retaining part of his kit, when Sullivan, who sat in the bar, vowed he would never see a hungry man want, and gave the soldier so good a luncheon, that in his gratitude he drew him aside at parting, and revealed what he believed to be an Indian charm.

'Sullivan never took any pupils, and, so far as I can learn, never attempted to train colts by his method, although that is a more profitable and useful branch of business than training vicious horses. It is stated in an article in *Household Words* on horse-tamers that he was so jealous of his gift that even the priest of Ballyclough could not wring it from him at the confessional. His son used to boast how his reverence met his sire as they both rode towards Mallow, and charged him with being a con-

federate of the Evil One, and how “the whisperer” laid the priest’s horse under a spell, and forthwith led him a weary chase among the cross-roads, till he promised in despair to let Sullivan alone for ever. Sullivan left three sons: only one of them practised his art with imperfect success till his death; neither of the others pretended to any knowledge of it. One of them was till recently a horse-breaker at Mallow.’

Mr. John S. Rarey, who came to this country from America early in 1858, announced that he could not only tame the wildest horses, but could teach others to do so. He was willing to teach his system to five hundred pupils, who were to pay ten guineas each for the knowledge, and at the same time bind themselves to absolute secrecy as to the means employed. He announced that his system was characterised by a total absence of punishment or violent coercion, neither did he use drugs or instruments; he did not subdue the spirit of the horse by starvation, but employed only means consistent with the utmost tenderness for the pupil under tuition. Mr. Rarey’s list of intending pupils was soon filled, the lessons were given, and the results fully bore out his promises: animals which had been known as very bad characters—stubborn or savage—after a short course of Mr. Rarey’s treatment, became perfectly quiet and docile.

‘One of the first horses operated upon by Mr. Rarey was Cruiser, the most vicious stallion in

England, "who could do more fighting in less time than any horse in England."

'Cruiser was the property of Lord Dorchester, and was a good favourite for the Derby in Wild Dayrell's year, but broke down before the race. Like all Venison horses, his temper was not of the mildest kind, and John Day was delighted to get rid of him. When started for Rawcliffe he told the man who led him on no account to put him into a stable, as he would never get him out. This injunction was of course disregarded, for when the man wanted some refreshment he put him into a country public-house stable and left him; and to get him out the roof of the building had to be pulled off. At Rawcliffe he was always exhibited by a groom with a ticket-of-leave bludgeon in his hand, and few were bold enough to venture into his yard.'

Mr. Rarey admitted that this animal, in comparison with others, gave him a great deal of trouble; yet in a short time Cruiser, who, by the united testimony of trainers and horse-breakers, was pronounced an untameable devil, became one of the best taught and domestic of horses, would follow his teacher lovingly and playfully, would lie down at command, and, in fact, do everything required of him.

Mr. Rarey's great feat was the taming of that hitherto untameable animal the zebra, a fine specimen being placed at his disposal by the Royal Zoological Society. Mr. Rarey gave him a private lesson first.

When publicly introduced to the arena his fury was beyond description; he yelled, screamed, threw himself on the ground, and lashed his heels with unintermitting fury. Finally, exhausted, but not subdued, he was removed; but after another course of private instruction he was quietly ridden into the arena by Mr. Rarey's groom and trotted about 'as tame as a donkey,' as the great horse-tamer remarked.

There can be no doubt of the subduing power of kindness on most animals, and Mr. Edward Mayhew relates the following story of a ferocious horse being tamed by him quite unintentionally :

'He (Mayhew) was of middle age when he entered as a student at the Royal Veterinary College. His mind became confused by the new sort of companions he encountered; by the novel objects which surrounded him; and by the strange kind of knowledge he was expected to master. This confusion was the greater because previous habit had not rendered him familiar with horseflesh. An animal, therefore, was needed so that reference might be made to its body, for an explanation of the books which the pupil was expected to comprehend. At length, in the corner of a back yard was discovered a lonely loose-box; inside there was a quadruped, and to this place the volume was daily taken with various morsels of bread or vegetable. Thus between reading, feeding, examining, and caressing, many an afternoon was most pleasantly whiled away.

‘It was necessary to indulge in certain intimate familiarities—sometimes to change the position of the animal or to finger its lower extremities. When doing this the student possessed no jockeyship to protect himself, nor was he conscious that any protection was necessary. He used to shut himself up with the companion of his studies.

‘More than a fortnight’s leisure had been pleasantly occupied, when, as Mr. Mayhew was one afternoon stealing to the being which lightened the tedium of his studies, and was in the act of opening the door, a number of fellow-students detected him so engaged. “Mayhew! Mayhew!” the group shouted as with one voice, “where are you going? Don’t open that door! Van Amburg is there—he’s a kicker and a biter! You’ll be killed! Don’t open the door!”

‘Van Amburg was the name of a thoroughbred racer, which had been sent to the college “for operation,” because of its supposed ferocity. Yet he, a novice, had passed many an hour in its society and could not have desired a more gentle companion. “We have often,” says Mr. Mayhew, “laid long together side by side; or, as I reclined upon the straw reading, the head would rest upon my shoulder, while a full stream of fragrant warmth would salute my cheek. Still, such a creature, so open to advances, so grateful for little kindnesses, was a reputed savage!”’

It is possible that a horse may be reduced to a state of quiet obedience through fear of the conse-

quences of rebellion, and here is an anecdote to the point :

‘Some years ago Captain ——, a well-known steeplechase rider, bought at Tattersall’s, for a very small sum, a magnificent horse, that no stranger in the yard dared approach, and which was, therefore, honestly put up and sold as a “man-killer.”

‘On these propensities being explained by the purchaser to his head-groom, the resolute fellow bluntly replied that he would not at all object to take care of the beast provided he were allowed, “in self-defence, to kill or cure him ;” and, accordingly, as soon as the homicide entered his stable, with a steady step, but avoiding looking into his eye, he walked up to him and then, not waiting for a declaration of war, but with a short heavy bludgeon striking the insides of his knees he knocked his forelegs from under him, and, the instant he fell, belaboured his head and body until the savage proprietor of both became so completely terrified, that he ever afterwards seemed almost to quail whenever his conqueror walked up to him.’

But this system certainly should not be adopted till the kindness that tamed the zebra has been tried. It sometimes happens that a so-called vicious horse has merely an antipathy to certain objects or individuals. A comic case is related of how a horse was cured of his objection to pigs :

‘A merchant of the name of Grant, of the Mile

End Road, being in want of a horse, inquired of a friend if he knew of a saddle-nag for sale. The reply of the friend was that he had one himself to dispose of, which he could recommend were it not for his unconquerable dread of swine, which rendered him dangerous either to ride or drive, and on which account alone he must part with him. Mr. Grant was not a person to be dismayed at trifles, and was also possessed of much quickness of perception, as the sequel will prove. Under a conviction that he could remedy this evil, he bought the horse, whose cure he set about by the purchase of a sow and a large litter of pigs. The horse, sow, and pigs were all then turned together in a sort of barn stable, well littered down with straw, where, with the exception of giving them food, they were never disturbed. The snortings, kickings, squeakings, and gruntings were, for two or three days, great and continual; and the consequence was that three or four of the younglings were demolished; but gradually the uproar ceased, and in a fortnight's time the lady mother was seen under the very belly of the horse, searching for the grains of corn left in the straw, with her progeny actively engaged around her.'

The ill-treatment a horse receives from stablemen sometimes makes the animal behave in a way that earns for it the character of vicious. A change of attendants or a different rider will sometimes bring a reform in the animal's manners.

‘I had a mare that would always kick on first being mounted, either with a saddle, or her clothing, or bare-backed. She was very handsome, and a beautiful goer. My wife took a fancy to have her for her own riding, much to my alarm. However, the side-saddle was put on, and two men and myself were ready to hold her if necessary. My wife got on her; to our astonishment the mare walked off, and never then or after attempted to kick with a side-saddle on; but was just the same as ever whenever man or boy mounted her. No doubt she had been ill-used or played tricks with by some one of the *he* generation, but never by a woman. We must not call this vice.’

The man who undertakes to break or tame a vicious horse must not flinch from his task when once begun, for if the brute once finds that he can master the two-legged animal, man, he becomes a worse brute than before. The quadruped must learn that man is his master.

Major H. A. Leveson, better known as the ‘Old Shekarry,’ was wounded and had his horse killed at the battle of Inkerman. While an invalid at Constantinople he endeavoured to purchase another horse to replace his slain Arab, ‘Desert Born,’ and the following is his account of how he purchased and broke one that had proved a little too much for the French cavalry. Here is his account of the affair :

‘At last, through the kindness of my friend Lieut.-

Colonel Magnan, of the Etat-Major of the French Army, I was allowed to pick one from out of a batch of Syrian horses intended for a regiment of dismounted dragoons, and went to the Daud Pacha barracks (two miles out of Stamboul), where the French cavalry were quartered, for that purpose. I was turning away, not at all satisfied with their appearance, as they were too slight, and not of the required height for my purpose, when I was accosted by an officer of hussars, who offered to show me a magnificent horse that no one would buy on account of incurable vice. He was a Saclaye Arab, bred near Blida in Algeria, and bought by a colonel of cavalry for three thousand francs in that country; but since his arrival in Turkey he had manifested such vicious habits that his owner had never mounted him. He was said to have killed one groom by jumping upon him after he had knocked him down with his fore-feet, to have bitten the chin off another, and to have half-eaten a *maréchal-de-logis* (sergeant-major), who had attempted to ride him. I found him tied fore and aft by huge cords, besides having his head fastened with a heavy chain, in a small thatched mud hut about eight feet by seven; and even in this confined space no one could approach him, for he lashed out with his heels, and tried to seize any one going near him with his teeth. He was a beautifully-shaped animal, with a blood-like head, wide and deep chest, good shoulders, and great length between the hip-bone and the hock,

but in woeful condition, for he had not been groomed for a couple of months. I saw at once that he would be just the animal to suit me, if I could only gain the mastery over him, so I went to his owner to inquire the price.

‘Although it was past mid-day, I found the gallant Colonel still at breakfast, of which he cordially invited me to partake; and after having done justice to his hospitality, I broached the subject. At first he merely shrugged his shoulders in true Frenchman’s style, but finding I was really anxious to have the animal, he told me that he would be glad to take anything for him; but that he did not like to dispose of him to any of his friends, as he was worthless, and people might accuse him of selling to another a horse that he dared not mount himself. I soon quieted his scruples on that score, and for the sum of six hundred francs (barely the price of his freight from Algeria), the chestnut was mine.

‘It soon got wind in the French camp that an English officer had bought *le Diable Rouge*, as he was commonly called, being a well-known desperate character, who had proved to be more than a match for all their *maîtres d’équitation*, and I had to stand a good deal of badinage about my bargain; some of them asking me, in a rather supercilious manner, when I was going to mount my new purchase, advising me when I did so to wear a couple of cuirasses, taking care to place one so as to cover my “head’s

antipodes," as that was the part where the poor sergeant was principally bitten. As the Yankees say, "My dander riz at thur chaff," and rather inconsiderately I told them that the nag had found its master when I bought him, and that even if he had thrown half the French army, and eaten them afterwards, I should mount him on the morrow. "*Nous verrons*," was their reply, with sundry rather uncalled for remarks relative to the foolhardiness of Englishmen in general and myself in particular; they expressed their belief that the equestrian performance would end in my being killed *comme une mouche*.

'I received an invitation to breakfast at the cavalry mess the following morning, and being determined to accomplish what I had undertaken, I accepted it. "In for a penny in for a pound," thought I, as I went to examine the animal, not exactly sure how I intended to begin, for Mr. Rarey's system had not then come out. He was in a vile temper; and notwithstanding I offered him food, and endeavoured to coax him to allow me to pat his neck, he put his ears back, drew up his lips, and attempted to rush at me open-mouthed if I only made a motion as if to approach him. I must confess that for a few minutes I was quite at a nonplus, for there seemed no probability of either getting a saddle on him or a bridle in his mouth. At last a happy thought struck me, and I went home to make preparations. I was still weak, having hardly got over the effects of my

wounds ; still, after my tall talk, it would not do to let the Frenchmen crow, and the next morning saw me clad in leathers and boots, riding towards the Daud Pacha Barracks, not very comfortable or sanguine of success, but determined to try it on *coûte que coûte*. A couple of Turkish soldiers, who acted as my grooms, carried a couple of strong ropes, a *koorjee*, or Indian-felt saddle, and a bridle fitted with an Arab bit, having a ring fastened to the end of the curb, which goes over the lower jaw and gives considerable additional purchase. Just before I sat down to breakfast I sent my "*chaoush*" (Turkish sergeant) to the commandant of the Turkish troops, near at hand, with a request for a fatigue party of twenty men, provided with spades and pickaxes, and on their arrival I informed the company that I was going to mount my new purchase, but that if any gentleman would like to take precedence in the affair I would be only too happy to cede him the honour. "They were all backward in coming forward," as the Game Chicken exclaimed when no one would try a round with him, and two or three tried to dissuade me from the attempt; but my mind was made up, and after breakfast I went down to the stable, accompanied by a crowd of officers and men.

‘I first directed the "Buono Johnnies" to take off the roof, and then to break down the upper part of the wall all round, until it was only four feet and a half high, which operation was soon done. I then

took two ropes, and throwing them lasso-fashion over the horse's head, I fastened them right and left to pickets strongly driven in the ground. When this was done I threw a blanket over his eyes to prevent him seeing what was going on, and then passing a long strip of canvas over his loins and pegging it down strongly on each side so as to prevent his moving about, I quietly cut the hobbles fastening his heels and fetlocks, and then made the Turks fill up the whole stable with sand, covering him up to the depth of nearly four feet. He was extremely restive when the first few shovelfuls were thrown in; but finding his head securely fastened, and perhaps feeling frightened at being blindfolded, he remained tolerably passive, although he showed his temper by continually grinding his teeth. When I saw him so completely buried that there was no chance of his being able to extricate himself, I took the strip of canvas from off his loins and uncovered his eyes, when he began to make violent efforts in order to free himself, but it was all in vain; like Samson in the hands of the Philistines when his head was shorn, his strength had departed from him, and after a few desperate struggles he became exhausted, and lay still, bathed in perspiration.

‘During his attempts to free himself I remained by his side, caressing him whilst quiet, and rating him when he showed temper; and after some time had elapsed he allowed me to handle his head as if

he had become more resigned to his fate. Round his neck I fastened a collar formed of pieces of wood tied together, so as to prevent him getting his head round and laying hold of my legs when mounted, a pleasant little pastime I heard he sometimes indulged in. Then I put on the saddle and fastened the girths and surcingle by scraping away the sand from under his belly, after which, with a good deal of coaxing and caressing, I managed to slip on the bridle, as well as a twitch over his nose, to use in case he again became obstreperous, and arming myself with a foil lent me by one of the officers present, no riding-whip being at hand, I jumped upon his back, getting on and off several times, to show that I had no intention of hurting him. All was now ready, and I gradually liberated his head from the cords which fastened it on either side, caressing him as I did so, and I was glad to see that he did not show any wickedness further than putting back his ears.

‘I again mounted him, and now gave orders to the Turks to pick the walls down and clear away the sand, which was soon done. It was an anxious moment; but at last he was free, and with a bound like an antelope cleared the *débris* of the stable and scoured across the plain amid the shouts of the French soldiers and the ejaculations of the Turks. Once firmly seated on his back, I did not care for the issue, and felt at home in the matter. He tried a few times to unseat me by rearing, plunging, and

buck-jumping; but finding that he could not succeed, and only drew punishment upon himself, for I gave him the spur pretty liberally, besides applying the foil sharply to his flanks when he did not obey, he gave up the contest, and I felt that I had obtained the mastery over him.

‘I gave him a brisk canter a few minutes just to try his paces, and then pulled up and walked, as I thought he went as if rather groggy from his late violent exertions. I rode for a couple of hours amongst the dark cypress-groves that overshadow the Turkish cemeteries that extend for some miles out of Stamboul, and he did not attempt to show any temper; so I rode him back to the French camp, feeling rather proud of my conquest, for he was once more rendered subservient to his master, man. Subsequently, by dint of patience and kind treatment, he forgot all his vice, and became extremely docile and gentle, doing me good service, and amply repaying the trouble I had taken with him.’

In Australia horses occasionally break away from their owners and take to the bush, where they increase and multiply. Of course as soon as it becomes known that a ‘mob’ of wild horses have established themselves in any part of the Australian plains or forests near a settlement, the settler endeavours to catch them, not only for the sake of increasing his stock, but because these wild ones decoy away the tame ones. In the more settled parts wild horses

are rare, but in the wilder parts there are plenty of wild and half-wild horses.

‘ From the mode of life the half-wild bush-horses of Australia lead, unaccustomed to the hand of man, and not dependent upon him for food, they learn to look upon him with alarm and suspicion, and it requires some manœuvring to approach them without creating a premature panic. On the approach of a horseman one or two on the outside sound an alarm and make off towards the rest, who thereupon rush together and a general concentration takes place. It is a fine sight to see a herd of these horses, of every size, age, and colour, mustering in this manner from hill and valley, as if by common consent. Though physically very powerful, they assume no threatening aspect; their safety lies in their speed; and as they eye the suspicious object their meaning is obvious. They say, as plainly as looks and gestures can say, “Now, what do you want? If you are a stranger, pass on quietly; but if you are for a gallop we are quite ready to try of what mettle that horse of yours is made.” ’

Occasionally the stallions become vicious, and will not hesitate to attack a horseman if he ventures too near their herd, laying back their ears and charging him open-mouthed; this, however, is of rare occurrence. A more common though less natural habit is that of destroying foals. This is a ruinous vice and most unaccountable. Horses that

acquire it are removed at once from the pastures ; but they cannot always be detected, the native dog and other causes being often wrongfully suspected in the first instance. I knew a stock-owner in one of the southern districts who kept a numerous herd of mares, amongst which he had lately introduced a promising horse ; some months afterwards he visited his station, when he made the usual inquiries of his stock-keeper concerning the state of his stud, and was informed that, owing to a drought, they were all rather thin, except the new horse, whose condition was excellent ; ‘and,’ added the man, ‘it’s no wonder, for he eats all the foals ;’ and, in short, it turned out, to the dismay of the proprietor, that, although he had not actually eaten, yet he had destroyed, all that he could lay hold of, which did not except many.

This extraordinary propensity is usually peculiar to horses which have long been running at large ; but this is not always the case, for I remember a remarkable instance of it in an animal that was constantly worked. He was tethered in his owner’s paddock, when a man, leading a large Clydesdale mare and her young foal, passed within reach of his rope ; the horse, seeing the young foal within the length of his tether, immediately seized him, threw him down and would have killed him in a very short time, had it not been for a lucky thought which struck the groom, who, guessing from the violent efforts made by the

mare to break away that she would best defend her offspring, slipped the halter from her head, when she attacked the enemy with such fury that she beat him off and saved her foal from the jaws of destruction.

The wild horses of America, both North and South, are descended from those imported by the first Spanish settlers on the continent. Having enjoyed freedom for generations, they are exceedingly wild, and fly from the sight of man; but, being fine animals and very hardy, they are much sought after, and, when caught, soon become docile. These wild horses are found in Mexico and the southern of the United States, as well as in Chili, Peru, and the vast plains of Paraguay and Patagonia, the reputed land of giants.

In Chili the wild horses are captured and broken in the following manner :

‘A party of four or five horsemen, with about twenty dogs, were seen formed in an extended crescent, driving the wild horses towards the river with shouts. All were armed with the lasso, which was swinging over their heads to be in readiness to entrap the first that attempted to break through the gradually contracting segment; the dogs serving with the riders to head the horses in. They continued to advance, when suddenly a horse with furious speed broke the line, passing near one of the horsemen, and for a moment it was thought he had escaped; the next he was jerked round with a force that seemed

sufficient to have broken his neck, the horseman having, the moment the lasso was thrown, turned round, and braced himself for the shock. The captured horse now began to rear and plunge furiously to effect his escape. After becoming somewhat worn out, he was suffered to run, and again suddenly checked. This was repeated several times, when another plan was adopted. The dogs were set on him, and off he went at full run in the direction of another horseman, who threw the lasso to entangle his legs, and precipitate him to the ground. The dogs again roused him, when he again started, and was in like manner brought to a stand; after several trials he became completely exhausted and subdued, when he stood perfectly still, and allowed his captors to lay hands upon him. The shouts of the men, the barking of the dogs, and the scampering of the horses, made the whole scene quite exciting.'

The following account is given by Mr. Darwin of the method of horse-breaking used by the Guachos of Chili and adjoining countries of South America :

'A troop of young horses is driven into the corral, or large enclosure of stakes, and the door is shut. We will suppose that one man alone has to catch and mount a horse which as yet had never felt bridle or saddle. I conceive, except by a Guacho, such a feat would be utterly impracticable. The Guacho picks out a full-grown colt, and, as the beast rushes round the circus, he throws his lasso so as to catch both the

fore-legs ; instantly the horse rolls over with a heavy shock, and, whilst struggling on the ground, the Guacho, holding the lasso tight, makes a circle, so as to catch one of the hind-legs just beneath the fetlock, and draws it close to the two front ; he then hitches the lasso, so that the three legs are bound together ; then, sitting on the horse's neck, he fixes a strong bridle without a bit to the lower jaw ; this he does by passing a narrow thong through the eyeholes at the end of the reins, and several times round both jaw and tongue. The two front legs are now tied closely together with a strong leather thong fastened by a slip-knot, the lasso which bound the three legs together being then loosed ; the horse then rises with difficulty. The Guacho, now holding fast the bridle fixed to the lower jaw, leads the horse outside the corral. If a second man is present (otherwise the trouble is much greater) he holds the animal's head whilst the other puts on the horse-cloths and saddle, and girths the whole together. During this operation the horse, from dread and astonishment at being thus bound round the waist, throws himself over and over again on the ground, and, till beaten, is unwilling to rise. At last, when the saddling is finished, the poor animal can hardly breathe from fear, and is white with foam and sweat. The man now prepares to mount by pressing heavily on the stirrup, so that the horse may not lose its balance ; and at the moment he throws his leg over the animal's back he

pulls the slip-knot, and the beast is free. The horse, wild with dread, gives a few most violent bounds, and then starts off at full gallop: when quite exhausted, the man, by patience, brings him back to the corral, where, reeking hot and scarcely alive, the poor beast is let free.'

The Patagonian Indians pride themselves on their horsemanship, and, generally speaking, believe themselves the finest equestrians and horse-breakers in the world; and they are very good ones. But occasionally a stranger gets among them, and shows them that the art of riding is not confined to their country. Captain Chaworth Musters, R.N., spent a considerable time among the Patagonians, and being a first-class horseman, volunteered to break one of their horses. His account is this:

'Conde's stepfather, generally known as Paliki, had a three-year-old iron gray, a very fine animal, tied up ready to be mounted for the first time. Paliki entered our toldo (tent) to borrow my girth, and chaffed me, asking me if I would venture to "domar" (break) him. Orkeke (the chief with whom Mr. Musters lived) seconded the proposal, and having stripped off mantle and boots, I proceeded to take the lazo and reins, and mount. The instant he felt the unwonted encumbrance he buck-jumped for several yards, finally jumping into the middle of the brook, and nearly losing his footing. I spurred him out, and once on the bank he commenced to whirl

round and round like a teetotum. At last I got his head straight, and after a few more buck-jumps, he went off at racing speed, urged by whip and spur. After a stretching gallop of three miles, I rode him quietly back, now and again turning him to accustom him to the bridle-thong, but not venturing to feel his mouth, and then brought him up to the *toldo* amidst the shouts of the spectators. Orkeke expressed great surprise, and wanted to know where I learned to “domar”; and the gratified owner insisted on presenting me with a piece of tobacco.’

A very rough kind of discipline was that to which the Hon. C. A. Murray subjected an unbroken horse on the North American prairies :

‘My companion V——’s Pawnee horse was brought up to him by an Indian leading it with a strong laryette; but as soon as he approached the animal snorted, reared, kicked, and showed every sign of spite and anger. If V—— came near it in front, it would run at him with its teeth; and if behind, lashed the air with a pair of very active heels. Not being a practised horseman, V—— could not creep behind the animal and spring on it, or perform any similar equestrian manœuvre; and I, having already mounted my roan, could see that the Indians were beginning to make signs to each other, and to laugh at our predicament.

‘Knowing how dangerous it is among these people to allow yourself to be a subject of ridicule, I

told V—— to ride my horse, and I would see what I could make of his wild beast. Accordingly, I took my cudgel in my hand, and walked towards him in front, telling the Indian by signs to hold on to the laryette. As I approached he snuffed and snorted as he had done to V——; and when he thought I was near enough, jumped forward to seize me with his teeth; but I saluted him with a heavy blow on the head with my cudgel, and, finding that it checked him, I repeated the application. He appeared stunned and stupefied for a moment, so I jumped on him, and telling the Indian to let go, gave the word to march. For the first few minutes I continued to belabour my unruly steed with the cudgel, and accompanied every blow with a loud, rough ejaculation, in order that he might learn to know my voice. Before I had long treated his ribs to the same wholesome discipline that his head had undergone he appeared to be quite humbled and docile, so I rode quietly on with the party; and whenever he showed symptoms of resuming his pranks, I had only to call to him in the same tone as before, and he returned to a sense of duty.'

The horses of the Indians in America, of the Guachos, and of various other uncivilised or only half-civilised people, are unshod. Shoeing in England is sometimes a difficult matter, so here is a sketch of how it is, or was, accomplished in the German duchy of Nassau.

‘In passing the shop of a blacksmith, who lived opposite to the Golden Kettle, the manner in which he tackled and shod a vicious horse always amused me. On the outside wall of the house two rings were firmly fixed, to one of which the head of the patient was lashed close to the ground; the hind foot to be shod, stretched out to the utmost extent of the leg, was then secured to the other ring about five feet high by a cord which passed through a cloven hitch fixed to the root of the poor creature’s tail. The hind foot was consequently higher than the head; indeed, it was exalted, and pulled so heavily at the tail that the animal seemed to be quite anxious to keep his other foot on *terra firma*. With one hoof in the heavens it did not suit him to kick; with his nose pointing to the infernal regions he could not conveniently rear; and as the devil himself was apparently pulling at his tail, the horse at last gave up the point, and quietly submitted to be shod.’

But, after all, this chapter cannot be better ended than by reiterating that kindness and firmness combined are the best qualifications for a horse-breaker.

CHAPTER XV.

FEATS OF HORSEMANSHIP: IN THE RIDING SCHOOL
AND OUT OF IT.

WHEN one has learned to ride well it is astonishing to find how much can be done on the back of a good, well-broken horse. Turpin's ride to York is often spoken of as an instance of good horsemanship and of endurance on the part of the animal, but modern researches have shown pretty conclusively that Turpin never did anything of the kind. Another man did accomplish that great ride, however, and the fact is thus related in *All the Year Round*, under the title of 'Old Stories Re-told':—

'The myth is founded on a real incident. In 1676 one Nicks, a robber haunting the road between Chatham and London, to rob sailors returning to town with their pay and Kentish traders on their way to London, plundered a traveller at four o'clock in the morning on the slope of Gadshill, the spot immortalised by Shakespeare, and for ever associated with Falstaff's delightful poltroonery. Being on a blood mare, a splendid bay, Nicks determined to

prove an *alibi* in case of danger. He rode off straight to Gravesend; there, detained an hour waiting for a boat, he prudently baited his horse; then, crossing the water, he dashed across Essex, full tilt to Chelmsford, rested half-an-hour and gave his horse some balls. Then he mounted, and flashed on to Bramborough, Bocking, and Wetherfield, fast across the downs to Cambridge, quick, by by-roads and across country, he slipped past Godmanchester and Huntingdon to Fenny Stratford, where he baited the good mare and took a quick half-hour's sleep. Then once more along the north road till the cathedral grew up over the horizon, larger—larger, and whiz—he darted through York Gate. In an instant he had led the jaded mare into an inn stable, snapped up some food, tossed off some generous life-giving wine, and in a fresh dress—say, green velvet and gold lace—strolled out gay and calm to the Bowling-green, then full of company. The lord mayor of the city happening to be there, Nicks sauntered up to him and asked him the hour. “A quarter to eight.” “Your most obedient.” When Nicks was apprehended and tried for the Gadshill robbery, the prosecutor swore to the man, the place, and the hour; but Nicks brought the Lord Mayor of York to prove an *alibi*, and the jury, disbelieving in Sir Boyle Roche's bird anywhere out of Ireland, acquitted the resolute and sagacious thief.’

But our object in this chapter is to present the

reader with anecdotes of skilful riding rather than endurance on the part of either man or horse. Circus-riders acquire a particular kind of skill, fox-hunters acquire another kind, and soldiers are drilled into a certain dexterity of riding quite different from the other two.

Circus-riders have to begin early in life, and out of the youngsters who make a beginning there are few that get beyond mediocrity, and many of them gradually sink till they become tent men or stablemen. Of course, circus horses must be carefully trained as well as their riders; but any one who has been to the 'Military Tournaments' of the last two or three years, and seen the 'Musical Ride' of the Life Guards, and other feats of horsemanship performed by non-commissioned officers and men of our cavalry, must admit there are some splendid riders in the army. The way the horse would lie down and form a bulwark for the soldier to fire his carbine and perform other military exercises over its body has always excited a great deal of interest. But the French are not far behind our men in the riding school, if they are in the open, as the following description of some of their evolutions will show:

'In 1865, when present at the opening of a French horse-show, in the Palace of Industry in the Champs Elysées, a troop of pupils of the cavalry school of Saumur appeared in the arena, dressed in

the style of Louis XV. with small three-cornered hats with ostrich plumes, green and gold coats, white leather breeches, and black boots, mounted on well-bred horses. They commenced by drawing up in a line, at foot-pace *passaging* (moving sideways) in front of the Emperor's box, each man as he passed saluting by raising his plumed hat; the horses keeping an exact line, every foot rising along the line at the same moment—a performance I had often seen attempted at professional hippodromes, but never with horses so fine or men so admirably trained. Other feats followed, the least successful of which was the leaping of low hurdles. After this very pretty exhibition, the troop retired, and presently returned, mounted on fat Norman horses, with buckskin demi-piqued saddles, without stirrups, their manes plaited with ribbons, their tails plaited and tied on one side; in a word, an exact reproduction of the horses and pupils of the Marquis of Newcastle. After saluting the Emperor they proceeded to execute *ballotades*, *caprioles*, and other tricks. In a *ballotade* the horse jumps off the ground bending both knees and houghs, and showing his hind shoes without kicking out. In the *capriole* the horse does the same, and kicks out with both hind-legs.'

Hunting-men of course have not, as a general rule, been through military schools; nevertheless they can, on occasion, make a very pretty display of

riding. They at all events know how to stick to their saddles, how to fall off when necessary, and how to guide and humour a high-spirited horse in the midst of a crowd. As an instance of what determined hunting-men can do the following anecdote is related :

‘When in the year 1815 Blucher arrived in London and drove at once to Carlton House, I was one of a few out of an immense concourse of horsemen who accompanied his carriage from Shooter’s Hill, riding on each side. Spite of all obstacles we forced our way through the Horse Guards gates and the troop of guardsmen ; in like manner through the light cavalry and the gate at Carlton House, as well as the *posse* of constables in the courtyard, and drove our horses up the flight of stone steps into the saloon, though the guards, beef-eaters and constables arrayed themselves against the irruption of Cossacks, and actually came to the charge. The Prince, however, in the noblest manner waved his hand, and we were allowed to form a circle round the Regent while Blucher had the blue ribbon placed on his shoulders and was assisted to rise by the Prince in the most dignified manner. His Royal Highness then slightly acknowledged our presence, we backed to the door and got down the steps again with only one accident, that arising from a horse, which, on being urged forward, took a leap down the whole flight of stairs.’

Turning from civilised Europe to the semi-barbarous people of the world we find that :

‘The Mexicans and South Americans are all good riders, and they constantly perform feats of horsemanship which would do credit to the Bedouins themselves. It is a common amusement for them to turn a horse at full speed upon a point designated by a blanket ; they will charge a solid rampart with the rapidity of lightning, and stop so suddenly that the feet of the horse will exactly touch the wall. For a small wager some have been known to rush at a cliff, rear their horse’s fore-legs in the air, so that they would for a moment tremble over the dread precipice, and then whirl round into safety. The Arabs, to show Layard (the explorer of Nineveh) their great estimation of his person, on one occasion amused themselves by similar equestrian feats. They would gallop off to a distance, put their lances at rest, and then make deliberately for his head. The compliment consisted in stopping the charger suddenly short so that the spear-point would *just touch* his face. He naïvely adds that his life would have been sacrificed if the well-trained steeds had made the slightest false step, or by any inequality in the ground disappointed the expectations of their masters. But the feat which shows most completely the high training of the horse is that which Darwin saw performed in Chili many years ago. The rider held the reins loosely in his left hand and dashed at

full speed up to a post previously prepared, and made the horse execute a complete wheel round it, while, with his right arm extended at full length, he kept one finger just touching the post. Having completed the circuit, a *demi-volte* was executed, the reins were transferred to the right hand, and without pause the horse wheeled round the post in the opposite direction, the rider keeping a finger of the other hand in contact with it.'

The Oriental nations, Moors, Turks, Egyptians and Persians, are good horsemen, and once on the back of a horse, it is not easy for the animal to dislodge his rider if he chances to be tolerably well schooled in riding. His late Majesty George IV., when Prince of Wales, witnessed a specimen of Egyptian horsemanship, which is thus described by one who was present:—

'On the 10th of November, 1803, a grand entertainment was given to his Excellency Elfi Bey, and a number of other distinguished visitors, by his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. The conversation turning upon the very excellent equestrian powers of the Mamelukes and Turks, the Prince said: "I have now in my stud an Egyptian horse so wild and ungovernable that he will dismount the best horseman in Elfi Bey's retinue." The Bey replied in Italian to the Prince: "I shall gratify your Royal Highness's curiosity to-morrow." An appointment consequently took place next day at two o'clock in the

Prince of Wales's riding-house, Pall Mall, when the Bey, accompanied by Colonel Moore, his interpreter, and Mahomet Aga, his principal officer, a young man of apparently great agility, entered the riding-house where the Prince and his royal brothers waited, attended by several noblemen, to witness the management of the horse, which never before could be ridden by anybody. One of the Mameluke's saddles being fixed by the grooms, the animal was led out of the stable into the riding-house, in so rampant and unmanageable a state that every one present concluded that no one would ever attempt to mount him. There was never a greater model of equine beauty; he was spotted like a leopard, and his eyes were so fiery and enraged as to indicate the greatest danger to any one who dared to mount him. Being led round the boundary, Mahomet Aga made a spring, seized him by the reins, and in an instant vaulted on the back of the animal, which, finding itself encumbered by a burden that it had never before felt, and goaded by the tightness of the Egyptian saddle, gave loose to his passion, and in the height of his ferocity plunged, but in vain, in every direction. The Mameluke kept his seat during this outbreak of temper for more than twenty minutes, to the utter astonishment of the Prince and every beholder: at last the apparently ungovernable animal was reduced to so tame a state as to yield to the control of the rider. The Prince expressed himself highly gratified, and

greatly complimented the officer on his equestrian skill.'

The wild and semi-wild horses of Australia have already been mentioned. Their riders, the stock-keepers, are good horsemen, though perhaps not up to the tricks just described. They are fine rough-riders, however; and they had need be, for chasing the wild horses in Australia is a most exciting and dangerous pastime, as the following account proves. A wild black stallion that had coaxed away several mares from a sheep-run was to be captured, and this was the way in which it was done:

'Our search commenced in a heavily-timbered flat, which gradually sloped down to a running stream, swollen by recent rains, beyond which, in a succession of rocky ridges, rose a range of mountains, with stony inaccessible peaks, where the winter snow long rests, the sides by turns bare and dark with forests and matted brush, divided by deep ravines, carved out by floods. It was at a spring in this flat that Long Peter, while cutting out some wild honey with a black, had caught sight of the wild horse.

'It had been arranged that Charley, whose nag was a fast but not a lasting one, should take up the running as soon as he came in sight of our prey and keep as close to the best horse—the black stallion, if possible—as he could. John was to follow, keeping Charley just in sight and pushing to the left or right, as occasion might require. Robert and Philip were

to take up the running as soon as the first two were blown, and I was to act under their orders. Three distinct cracks of a whip were to be a signal for pushing on, while the same signal was to be continually repeated when the thicket closed the view, in order that we might follow the right track. "And mind, Barnard," said Robert to me, "keep sight of us, but don't press your horse in going over difficult ground, trust all to him; and if you get lost, give him his head, and he will take you to some stockman's hut, as he knows every one on these mountains. And now look to your girths, and take up your stirrups two holes, for if we find here we shall have to ride like the devil."

'Having thus prepared, we spread in a half-circle and paced slowly through the forest, with our eyes on the ground. Huge trunks of fallen trees in various stages of decay, and deep pits where the roots had been torn up, crossed our path in every direction. But my horse twisted by, or leaped over, these obstacles with a perfection of instinct that left me nothing to do but preserve my seat, and keep a look-out worthy of my apprenticeship as a bushman.

'Half-an-hour elapsed and no sign of anything, when a low whistle from Philip brought us to a halt. We pressed towards him. He had dismounted, and pointed to the fresh tracks of several unshod horses, among which that of a foal was visible. With signs he bade us follow, and marched on foot, leading his

horse, with his eyes on the ground, noting every sign. At some richer herbage he stopped, passed his hand over it, and gathered up a tuft of grass. "They are close by," he whispered; "this is fresh cropped, and damp from a horse's mouth." "Mount, then," said Dawood; "they will be drinking at the Black Swan water-hole; give them a few moments to fill themselves, and then, Charley, don't spare your old horse; the black is worth a hundred of him. Let's make a circuit beyond Paddy Ryan's pool, and then ride up the bed of the creek."

'Charley nodded without answering, for he was just letting out his girths a hole, thinking he had hauled them too tight. For my part, I was red and pale by turns; my teeth chattered as they used to at the side of the gorse covers.

'We started, reached the running water, slid into it at one of the cattle-runs, and rode up, splash, splash, in Indian file. There had been a good deal of rain the week before, and the snow had melted on the top of the mountain range, so that the stream, which since I have seen scarcely sufficient to chain the water-holes with a thin thread, rose to our horses' bellies, and rattled past drowning the sound of our cavalcade, until, rounding a miniature promontory, our leader halted and held up his hand. Looking through a clump of bush, we could see the black stallion standing up to his knees in a pool, drinking, snorting, and pawing the water into foam—a splendid

picture of beauty and strength. As he was turned from us we could just see his small ears peeping above a mane that descended on both sides his massive, arching neck, down to his knees, as from time to time he shook it, and played with two mares, a gray and a chestnut, which drank and meekly admired their lord from a little distance, while another black mare moved slowly up a cattle path towards the mountains, with a yearling colt trotting at her heels. Charley had to get clear from the spreading branches of a fallen tree before he could be seen. The stallion looked up as a bough cracked loudly, and Charley's horse appeared within twenty yards; then, turning, he stared for a moment with his fierce, fiery eyes through his wet, hanging locks, and with a shrill neigh of warning that re-echoed from the mountains like the voices of a hundred horses, the steed of steeds dashed up the breast of a precipitous mountain track, followed by the black mare, the others flying in an opposite direction. At the same moment Charley's spurs were dashed into his horse's sides, his head turned up a shorter and easier exit from the stream, and quick as thought he was at speed, thundering and rolling down stones and gravel upon us. More leisurely we followed; the hunter and the hunted disappeared behind the first hill, to reappear almost immediately on a narrow path worn by wild cattle along the mountain side—a glorious, frightful sight. But we neither saw nor felt any danger.

“Hold hard, and sit back, Armorer,” was all I heard from Robert, as we rushed away, our eyes fixed on the flying stallion. Scarcely did I notice then the broken chasms, the huge boulders, the narrow, crumbling rocks, over which, goat-like, my horse made his way. Mad with excitement, on we bounded, where a stumble would have been certain death. At length, at a wave of the hand from Robert, turning to a more circuitous and safer path, I lost sight of my companions, and, pulling on my horse at a slow trot, I crowned the heights and came upon a low level green gorge of galloping ground, where I rejoined Paginton and Robert, and could see Charley and John just disappearing round a bend. Pressing on steadily over turf, level as a bowling green, no doubt the bed of some primæval water-course, we again caught sight of the stallion, Charley’s mare at his quarters, seemingly almost within reach of the glorious beast. Presently the gorge began to close up; a solid wall of rock, higher than a cathedral tower, loomed before us. “Hurrah, hurrah!” I shouted. “He’s pounded!”

“Hold your tongue!” cried Robert. “You’ll need breath before night. There’s a road to the bottom that will make us sweat before we’ve done.” Presently we saw the dark shadow of a horse and horseman appear for an instant on a crag above us, as he emerged from a narrow defile, which under the wall of solid rock wound from the gorge along which

we had been racing. As we turned into the defile the smooth ground ceased, and we rattled over a mere sheep-track against the breast of the mountain. We saw the stallion disappearing far above us over the crest of the mountain, and could hear Charley's signal of distress. Philip pushed on, crying, "Save your horse, Armorer, till you get to good ground." And in a few minutes I was alone, but soon overtook Charley, whose horse had fallen at a tree, and did not seem much inclined to get up again. He waved his whip, and I trotted slowly on, doubting if I should see anything more of the stallion or the party. At length I reached the top, and hearing a "coo-ey-ing," I made towards a cattle-track, and found Robert waiting for me.

"I see," said he, "that the black horse will make for the flats below; at the next turn we can see for miles, so you will be sure to hit him off if your Wallaby's wind holds out, and Paginton does not manage him before he gets down, which I don't think he will without your help."

"This speech gave me new heart. I took a pull at my little horse, touched him with the spur, and found him strong and full of pace. At length we crowned the crest of the dividing range, and paused for a moment before descending the steep gulf that offered the only path downwards. From below rose through the silent air, from time to time, the distant reports of the stock-whips, re-echoing from the

basalt rocks louder and louder, and then dying away.

‘These sounds, and the sight of the boundless plain, half-maddened me. I dashed down the steep watercourse, my horse bounding like a deer from boulder to boulder. “On!” I cried, “on, Rob!” “Steady, steady!” shouted my Australian friend, in a clear, calm voice of command, “or you’ll kill your horse if you don’t break your neck.’ We are sure of him now, if you will only save up your impatience a little longer. Pull up, Barnard, this moment, and follow me.” There was no disobeying common-sense and command together. He then took the lead, and leaning back on the saddle till my head nearly touched the horse’s counter, leaving the reins loose, leaping, standing, now walking, now gently trotting, I followed the best bushman in the colony.

‘Robert’s consummate bushmanship led him the true course, even when we were going fastest; every cattle-track was familiar to him. At length we cleared the broken path, and from a sort of green plateau caught another glimpse of the plain below.

“Now,” said Robert, “you can’t miss your way; keep to the left a little—I’ll to the right, and we shall have him between us, for Phil and John must be beat by this time. Your path is short and easy, give your horse a moment to wind, then don’t spare him.” So saying, and with a wave of his whip, he turned short to the right, and dashed down towards

the plain. Then I gave my nag his head, and started once more. Before I had cantered a hundred yards Wallaby turned sharply, pushed through some thick brushwood, tearing one leg of my trousers to tatters, and came upon a cattle-track which soon brought me to a road of nature's making. I then reached a belt of forest that divided me from the plain, through which my horse brought me on the glorious grassy desert just in time to see in the horizon Philip and John waving their hats to Robert, who about a quarter of a mile on my right was taking up the running.

“Hurrah, hurrah!”

“Yoicks! Tally-ho! Hark forward, away!” Standing up in my stirrups, my eyes fixed upon the speck which instinct told me was our chase, I bounded along over the sward. Very soon the black stallion showed nearer and nearer; he still made a good fight, and struggled bravely, but at three-quarter speed I gained on him at every stride. Now, sure of my prey, I gave vent to my pent-up feelings. I screamed, shouted, and waved my cap as though I had been cheering on a pack of hounds, running in view.

“Robert, sparing neither whip nor spur, was seeking to weary him out, by heading him again and again; but his own steed was done, and he beckoned me on just as the good chestnut stumbled and rolled over like a log. “All right,” cried he, standing

over his beaten horse, "push on, Barnard; now's your time." So I left him. In five minutes I found I could ride round the wild horse, so I pressed on him constantly. At every wave of my whip he doubled like a beaten hare, but showed his teeth when I headed him, and glared with fiery eyes that showed it would not be safe to come to close quarters. Thus pressing and doubling we carried on for some miles, until the stallion's pace became a trot, and sometimes a walk, but still, whenever I neared him, he showed dangerous fight. While doubting how to end the conflict, I saw something looming in the distance that proved to be a lot of tame stock horses driven by a boy towards a neighbouring station. The boy—a true cornstalk—saw how the game stood, pushed on to join me, and together, one on each side, we dashed, shouting and lashing at the stallion. His tail shivering, his sides heaving he vainly tried to escape a fresh horse and rider; wherever he bounded we followed, and before he knew where he was, had him entangled in the mob of tame ones. This done, I shouted "Victory!"—young Cornstalk something more homely and energetic—and then, flogging, hurrying, trampling in a cloud of dust, we drove the lot pell-mell into a stockyard. The slip rails were closed in an instant, and the black stallion, after one fierce, despairing leap at the lofty paling, sank exhausted to the ground.

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‘I shall not spin out this adventure by telling how we tamed the wild stallion, and drove in both mares and cattle and made good profit by the transaction. It is enough to say that this rubbed off all the remains of my *new chummery* ; from that time I was received as a bushman.’

CHAPTER XVI.

HORSE DEALING.

HORSE dealing is supposed to be a business in which no mercy is shown to the greenhorn. Experience purchased dearly is of greater value than that which is otherwise acquired, and certainly some horse-dealers do make their customers pay through the nose for ascertaining the value of a horse. Of course there are honest dealers to be found. Some of the London men do so much business that it would not pay them to be guilty of anything like trickery or dishonesty, but the wanderers who journey from fair to fair, and from town to town, with strings of 'screws,' are oftentimes not quite so particular, and will resort to any dodge to get the highest possible price for the worst kind of animal. Therefore, a man who inwardly feels that he is not a thorough judge of horseflesh should always purchase of a dealer of good standing, with a well-known place of business.

'In purchasing of a regular dealer, a customer must be prepared for a little close raillery. The only way to receive it is with good humour, and if genius

permits, with a repartee that may throw back the laugh.

‘One day, at a dealer’s, some other gentlemen were looking at the stables, and two of them at the very horse I was minutely measuring. They appeared to be a couple of schoolboys just escaped from Eton, or perhaps freshmen who had spent a term at Cambridge. The dealer was obviously speculating on a purchaser in one of these youths, and seemed nettled at my narrow scrutiny, which threatened to disappoint his designs.

“‘Tom,” said he to his ostler, “go to the tailor and borrow his measure and shears for the gentleman.”

“‘And stop at the saddler’s on the way, Tom, to buy a halter for your master,” I added.

‘The retort told, coarse and trite as it was, and I was allowed to finish my scrutiny in peace.’¹

One good maxim in purchasing a horse is not to expect too much for your money.

‘We believe it was Lord Barrymore who, at Newmarket, among a vast crowd of the sporting world, mounted himself on a chair, and having made a signal for silence, said aloud:

“‘Who wants a horse that can gallop twenty miles an hour, trot seventeen, and walk six?’”

‘Of course vociferations of “I do, I do,” were

¹ Sir G. Stephens—*Adventures of a Gentleman in Search of a Horse*.

not wanting, to which the facetious nobleman replied:

“Well, gentlemen, when I meet with such a one I will let you know.”’¹

The greenhorn had better always take with him a friend experienced in horseflesh to see whether the animal he intends purchasing has any blemish.

A veterinary surgeon’s opinion as to soundness of wind and limb should also be obtained, as well as a warranty from the vendor that the animal sold is sound and free from vice; but even these precautions sometimes are unavailing, for it occasionally happens that dealers themselves are not always familiar with their horses’ defects.

‘I once bought one in the country; I rode him to town—only a few miles, and he fell; he was not blemished, and I returned him. The man would not believe my story; he fancied, as they often pretend, that I returned him from caprice, and was dissatisfied. I offered to keep the horse on one condition—that he should ride with me a mile over the stones at my pace; if he did not stumble I would have him. He readily assented; we mounted, and set off at a moderate trot.

“There never was a surer-footed horse in England—stones or sward——”

‘But scarcely were the words out of his mouth before the animal gave him the lie direct, blemished

¹ Blaine’s *Encyclopædia of Rural Sports*.

his own knees irretrievably, and as by way of appropriate rebuke caused his rider almost to bite his tongue off in the fall! The horse had a running thrush.’¹

The following anecdote, related by the writer just quoted, will show that public sales are dangerous places for sellers as well as for buyers. ‘A learned barrister, well known in the literary world for his critical acumen, sent his horse to the Bazaar for sale by auction. Being well aware of the tricks of such markets, he attended the sale himself, and carefully noted the number of his lot in his pocket-book. He felt not a little pleased at the horse’s spirited *entrée* when ushered up the ride, and still more gratified at the auctioneer’s ingenuity in painting his merits, though utterly at a loss to guess where the deuce he had learnt them. He had purchased the animal a week before for forty guineas, and hitherto had not discovered a single redeeming quality to compensate for fifty faults. The biddings were slack however, *malgré* the auctioneer. Five pounds—five ten—six pounds—reluctantly dropped at long intervals. “This will never do,” thought the learned gentleman, and by way of stimulating competition, he jumped at once to thirty guineas. The knowing ones stared, and promptly took the hint: in less than a minute the lot was knocked down to him at fifty guineas. He regretted out-standing his market, but consoled

¹ Stephen—*Adventures of a Gentleman in Search of a Horse*.

himself with the comfortable reflection that, at least, he had learnt his horse's value, and had not been taken in by the dealer.

“By your leave—make way there—stand aside, gen'l'm'n,” and two or three rough salutations of sticks, whips, and voices warned him of the rapid approach of the next lot. The learned counsel awoke from his reverie—rubbed his eyes—adjusted his glasses—gaped, and stared, and gaped again at the new-comer with petrifying suspicion. He turned with fumbling agitation to his pocket-book, and found that, mistaking the lot, he had puffed and purchased his neighbour's horse!

‘Having two worthless animals thus unexpectedly thrown upon his hands, he ventured no more on puffing, but allowed his own to go at its just price, which proved exactly enough to buy him a new wig for the circuit.’¹

If the barrister had been as learned in the riggs of the horse-mart as he doubtless was in the law, he would probably not have made such a mistake. However, if he is still alive he may console himself with the reflection, that many others have made equally grave mistakes. The following story shows that dealers do not always make the best market. ‘I remember some years ago, one charming morning, we met at a favourite cover in the best part of

¹ Stephens—*Adventures of a Gentleman in Search of a Horse*.

our country. Tom Duckett was then on a splendid dark-brown horse which he had purchased some short time back out of some racing stables. He was too slow to become a plater. The horse had been seen before in one or two remarkably good things; and he looked so well on this particular day, that he attracted the attention of a gentleman who understood to the full the value of blood. A fox was soon halloed away, and the first ten minutes gave no cause of complaint to the lovers of pace: there was scarcely time to think, much less to talk, and the only things that were clearly manifest were the black skirts of Tom Duckett's coat and the dark-brown horse's quarters in front all the way. Under the circumstances of the case, it is not extraordinary that the hounds should have over-run the scent, and the natural consequence, a slight check, ensued.

“Three hundred, Mr. Duckett, for the brown horse,” said an eager customer, afraid of being too late in the market. “Three hundred, and you may ride my second horse if you can get him, and send the brown horse home by my groom at once.”

“Thank you, my lord, for the offer; but we shall be down to the Styx in five minutes, and if he jumps it I shall want more than that for him.”

‘The Styx is a brook not so easily crossed as its namesake. Charon himself, on a thoroughbred one, would have looked twice at it and turned away. Indeed I never saw anyone jump it that did look at

it; and I have seen it full of performers of the highest character that did not. Tom, however, had a not undeserved opinion of his horse's merits, and in a few minutes more he had a chance of putting them to the test. Down they came; and as the leading hounds dragged their sterns after them up the bank, one man, and one alone, about a hundred yards to the right of them, was seen to be in the right field; four were in the water a little to the left, one on the top of Old Melody, and the rest nowhere. Of course someone knew of a ford or a bridge, and at the end of another twenty minutes they caught the hounds; when the first thing that was seen worth notice, was poor Tom Duckett, leading the brown horse by the bridle, badly staked at the very last fence before the hill. The brown horse died that night, and poor Tom was a bankrupt within twelve months from that day.¹

Great fluctuation often happens in the price of the same animal in a few months, which does not arise from any diminution of his intrinsic value, but depends on the situation in which he is placed from being offered to different classes of persons.

'I went to see,' says a well-known sporting writer, 'a stud of horses for sale at Tattersall's: I perceived that one horse among the stud seemed to attract very great attention, and this I thought was

¹ Chas. Clarke—*Crumbs from a Sportsman's Table*.

easily accounted for, from his being one of the finest horses I think I ever saw. But I found another cause for this general attraction, when I heard he was not only beyond competition the widest jumper in the stud, but known to be the widest brook, or drain-jumper in Lincolnshire, where he had been hunted. He was put up with the rest, and I bought him at a hundred guineas. He was no sooner knocked down to me than I felt I had done wrong. Several others of the same stud were sold at far higher prices, not one of which could any way be compared with him as to looks, size, or breeding; in short, I felt certain he was too cheap to be good. A couple of guineas to the head groom produced no explanation, but that he was a very good horse, the fastest in the stud, and the biggest jumper in Lincolnshire. I hunted him; found him fast enough to go at his ease up to any hounds with any scent; nothing too big for him in his stride, and a mistake seemed impossible, so it was anything he chose to try; but he seemed to think it beneath his dignity to jump at any ordinary fence, and I should say, during three times I rode him with hounds, he was on his nose with me twenty times. He had another pleasing propensity; if there were twenty little water-drains in the field, I would back him to put his foot in every one of them. I was lucky enough, however, to find a farmer who piqued himself on being the boldest rider in the country where I was

hunting, and had on more than one occasion pounded the whole field. It struck me the widest jumper in all Lincolnshire and my friend the dauntless farmer would be well matched; it ended in my allowing him to try 'Lincoln' at a brook that had been considered in the hunt as impassable without a boat or taking a cold bath. The price was agreed upon if the horse did it: he did it and to spare. I drew 50*l.*, taking in exchange decidedly one of the cleverest hunters I ever had, and eventually sold him at a hundred and fifty, when fourteen years old.¹

And here is another story, showing how the price of a horse may make a vast rise in a short time. 'Some summers ago, a horse found its way into the stable of a celebrated dealer in Piccadilly, that, like a young lady of great beauty and fortune on her first appearance at Court, created quite a sensation amongst a certain set, known for their exclusive notions respecting women and horses. The West End was in a state of excitement. Four hundred pounds had been offered to, and refused by, this spirited dealer in hard bargains, who himself had given three hundred for him. The fame of the nag spread even beyond Bow Bells, and a brother dealer from the neighbourhood of Romford found his business stand still—nobody would come to his yard till the

¹ Harry Hicover—*Stable Talk and Table Talk*.

wonder was disposed of. Romford even caught the mania, and was determined to have a peep at the phenomenon, and quietly walked one fine morning into the mews where the beauty was preserved. The nag was paraded, and then the following short colloquy passed:—"There, Romford, is not he a top-sawyer? You complain I have not bought any horses of you lately; bring such a sort as that and I'll buy a hundred." Romford picked up his ash-plant, slapped it smartly on his boot-top, and walking quietly out of the yard by his friend's side, said: "Well, Piccadilly, 'tis a nice horse and he looks fresh and well, and I bought him eight months ago at Howden fair at thirty-five sovereigns." Such was the fact.¹

Smartness in horse dealing is not confined to Great Britain. The Yankees are awfully 'cute' at making a bargain. The following is a picture of an American horse-dealer:

'Just before the snow and ice disappeared, a Yankee field officer, a horse-dealer by vocation, one Major Slocombe, arrived in our garrison (Quebec) from the States. He brought with him a string of horses, one or two of which, according to the major's account, would have distanced Eclipse. Give me an American horse-dealer for hyperbole and gag; he is the boy for metaphor. A friend of mine, Captain

¹ "Ringwood," in *Sporting Magazine*, February 1834.

J—— of the Engineers, and myself had agreed to purchase a good cocktail that could gallop a little, with the intention of running him in the spring, as it had been determined upon to establish something in the shape of garrison races as soon as the weather would permit. With this object in view we repaired to the livery-stables, where “the Major” had put up his batch of thoroughbreds. The loquacious owner of this wonderful batch of high-bred cattle was in the yard, smoking his Havannah, whip in hand, and looking as ‘cute’ as a thorough Kentuckian can look. After enumerating the several estimable qualities of every animal in the stud, he inquired what sort of a “crittur” we wanted. Upon being informed that we were in quest of a nag “wot could get over the ground rather smartish,” he replied :

“Now, gentlemen, I’ll be candid with you—(mark the Yankee’s candour, I pray you, good reader)—if you want a *slow* horse he won’t suit you, for may I go to everlastin’ smash if he ain’t the fastest galloper I ever clapt my eyes on—that ’ere chestnut I mean, gentlemen—him as the boy’s a leading up and down. May I be *catamawpously chawed up* if there’s his ekal in all Canada. You all know God Almighty was employed six days a makin’ the world; well, and on the seventh he put on that horse’s forehead. I say, you Hiram, run him down, and let the British officer see what a genoowine American horse is. He arn’t got no *vishiousness* in him. Lord

love ye ! he's as spry as a fiddler and as pleasant as a tea-party. He's dirt cheap at four hundred dollars."

'As we did not quite agree with our American friend as to this fact, we took leave to express our dissent, the surest and most comprehensive method being to offer half the money. After a good deal of swearing, lying, higgling and bargaining, the horse was ours for two hundred and fifty dollars ; and he did in part deserve the high eulogiums Major Slocombe passed upon him ; he was a good honest horse, and ran gamely and well.'¹

There is some difference between selling and giving a horse. The old proverb says you should not look a gift horse in the mouth ; but among certain American Indians it seems the custom for the giver of a horse to give the recipient a good thrashing.

'When General Street and I arrived at Kee-ook's village, we were just in time to see an amusing scene in the prairie a little back of his village. The "Foxes" were making up a war party to go against the "Sioux," and had not suitable horses enough by twenty, had sent word to the "Sacs" the day before, according to ancient custom, that they were coming on that day at a certain time to *smoke* that number of horses, and they must not fail to have them ready. On that day and at that hour the twenty young men

¹ *The Sporting Magazine*, 1843.

who were beggars for horses were on the spot, and seated themselves on the ground in a circle, where they went to smoking. The villagers flocked around them in a dense crowd, and soon after there appeared on the prairie at half-a-mile distance, an equal number of young men of the "Sac" tribe, who had agreed to give each a horse, and who were then galloping around them at full speed, and gradually, as they went around in a circuit, coming nearer to the centre until they were at last close to the ring of young fellows seated on the ground. Whilst dashing about thus, each one with a heavy whip in his hand, as he came within reach of the group on the ground, selected the one to whom he intended to present his horse; and as he passed gave him the most tremendous cut with his lash over the naked shoulders; and as he darted around again, he plied the whip as before, and again and again, with a violent crack, until the blood could be seen trickling over his naked shoulders; upon which he instantly dismounted, and placed the bridle and whip in his hand, saying: "Here, you are a beggar; I present you a horse, but you will carry my mark on your back." In this manner they were all in a little time "whipped up," and each had a good horse to ride home and take into battle. His necessity was such that he could afford to take the stripes and the scars as the price of the horse, and the giver could afford to make the present for the satisfaction of putting

his mark on the other, and of boasting of his liberality.’¹

How many English gentlemen would care to receive a horse, with the accompanying castigation; the stripes being well laid on by a powerful groom, armed with a stout whalebone whip?

¹ George Catlin—*North American Indians*.

CHAPTER XVII.

STORIES OF DEALERS AND DUPES.

SOME rare stories are told of the way in which dealers cheat their customers. Here are a few of them :

‘My first horse-dealing adventure was with a Quaker, and I approached the owner of the first object of my speculation with much confidence. It was a well-bred, gay little gelding, full of life and spirit; I approved and purchased him. Friend Joseph was very precise with me. “There is the horse, friend; my price is thirty guineas.”

“Will you allow me to try him, sir?”

“Thou art a stranger to me, friend; thou mayst injure the animal, and we shall not know who is in fault.”

“Will you warrant him, sir?”

“He has always carried me well, friend; I believe him to be sound, but few men are agreed upon what soundness is.”

“Is thirty guineas the lowest price?”

“I have asked thee what I believe to be his just value, and I shall take no less.”

‘I paid my money, and was well pleased with my purchase for *three days*, and then discovered, what a very little reflection might have told me at first, that the Quaker being two stone lighter than myself and presumably a quiet rider, a horse that would carry *him* safely would in less than a week break his own knees and endanger my neck. He was a good horse, though not fit for me.’

In this case the Quaker certainly cannot be called a cheat, but Sir G. Stephens relates another deal in which he was regularly taken in and done for :

‘I set off,’ he says, ‘to examine “a sweet mare” with a pedigree as long as her tail. She belonged to “a gentleman,” and I was determined to see my “gentleman.” A sort of nondescript, half-gentleman, half-jockey, but with the word rogue as legibly written on his face as if it had been tattooed there, came forward. “Bought her for breeding, sir ; won’t do ; dropped three fillies running. Sweetest creature that ever was crossed, but she won’t breed a colt, and she must go.”

“Do you warrant her, sir ? ”

“Warrant her ? To be sure ! I’ll warrant her to fly with you.”

“Do you warrant her sound ? ”

“Tickleback sound ! Why, she is as well known at Tattersall’s as myself.”

‘I was by no means satisfied, but in decency I could press the point no further ; I liked her looks,

and thought the best policy was to assume that his intentions were good. I told him I would send a cheque by my servant, and would trouble him to send back a receipt, with the usual warranty, and left him. In a couple of hours John brought home the mare and the receipt. "How does she go, John?" "Pretty well, sir." I saw the rascal was drunk, and asked him for the receipt. He fumbled first in this pocket and then in the other, and at last produced an unstamped acknowledgment for the money, but not a word of warranty! The next morning, when sober, he owned that "the gentleman" had given him half a crown, and the "gentleman's groom" had helped him to spend it! The rest was easily explained: "The gentleman" was gone to Melton or Newmarket instead of Tattersall's—but the mare went there, and was certainly as well known as I could wish. It was the only word of truth the fellow had spoken. She had slipped her hip in foaling, and had been sold three times in three months at an average price of ten pounds. I only lost twenty by her, and thought myself lucky.'

With rare perseverance Sir George tried yet again, but it was a long time before he could find one to suit his fancy. At length he found one that he thought would do, and it certainly did—a considerable amount of damage before he managed to get rid of it. Sir George says:

'A chestnut horse was advertised for sale at some

livery stables of the first respectability. He was “*bonâ fide* the property of a gentleman, and parted with for no fault.” The advertisement ended here, and the absence of all the usual encomiums persuaded me that the description was true. My eye does not often deceive me as to the external pretensions of a horse; the animal in question was beautiful, and his action good. I inspected and handled him very minutely; I picked up every foot, passed my hand down every leg, and found neither fault nor blemish. I mounted him, and rode him for an hour; I was satisfied, and bought him, taking care to obtain my warranty myself. For two whole days he did justice to his owner’s representations.

‘On the third day I was too much occupied to ride, but the following morning I hurried to the stables, resolved to make up for lost time. No sooner was my foot in the stirrup than, with the cunning of a monkey, he raised his near hind foot, and shoved the stirrup-iron away. He repeated this fun two or three times. I tried on the off side, but he was as clever there.

“Off with the saddle, John; we’ll try him without,” but the sly rogue was up to me; and crouched like a camel.

“Pick up his fore-leg, John.” Nor would that do; he reared, broke away from two men who were helping, and galloped up the ride. A full hour was spent by me, and every man in the yard, to get

across him, but all in vain ; defeated and mortified, I returned home, leaving directions to sell him. My warranty *did not extend to safety in mounting*. I had not been home an hour before word was brought that he had kicked an ostler and laid him up ! I was of course bound to indemnify, as well as cure, the sufferer ; and sent the savage brute to Osborn's. The next morning a second groom received a kick that cost me a guinea. I sent the beast to the hammer as a vicious horse. He was sold for more than he cost, but not until he had sent me a third claimant for compensation ! It was a dealer that bought him, and he certainly found a discipline to cure his vice. He killed him in less than a month.

‘ I was curious to know the reason of his extreme docility for the first three days after I had him. By a fee to some of the understrappers at the stables I soon arrived at the truth. He had been tied up to the rack both day and night for a week before, and never allowed to sleep except standing !—enough to tame a tiger, it must be confessed. I lost nothing by him, however, and I gained both a specific for a vicious horse and a wholesome apprehension of gentlemen.’¹

Frenchmen are not generally credited with much knowledge of horseflesh, and the following account of the manner in which an Englishman sold a horse—

¹ Sir G. Stephens—*Adventures in Search of a Horse*.

and the Frenchman who bought it, by way of revenge—is amusing :

‘Riding one evening after dark along the road from Calais to Dunkerque on a favourite English horse, down he dropped as if he had been shot, sending me over his ears *en avant courier*. This mishap had arisen from my (Englishman-like) taking the side of the pavé in preference to the middle of the route. A drain had been left open, of about two feet deep, into which my horse had gone. He was up in a moment ; I remounted, and what I said about French highroads was bad enough *then*, but when I examined my horse’s knees by the first light I came to, and found two concavities made in them something the size of a teacup, I fear what I said was ten times worse. I really now thought that from this trap having been left open, and holding myself a loser of about thirty pounds each knee, some redress would be afforded me. I found, however, that redress, something like promotion or reward for services, was likely to be some time in coming, for I was first told I had no business riding where I did ; and, secondly, from whom was the redress to come ? Before this could be got at it was necessary to find who made the drain, and it behoved me to find that out. “Did Monsieur know who it was ?” Of course Monsieur did not. I saw my chance was out, but to render assurance doubly sure out came again the infernal “*Il faut qu’il l’apprenne donc.*”

‘The prayers of the wicked are sometimes heard: I prayed for a chance to return all favours to Monsieur le ——, and it came. I learned that his lady had taken a mania for riding *en Amazon*, and that her lord and master would give any price for a perfectly broke English horse accustomed to carry a lady.

‘Just before I left England a very beautiful horse, that had been carrying a friend of my wife’s, had unfortunately gone broken-winded, so much so as to be useless. I started my groom off for this said horse, and he brought him back in blooming condition, and looking worth as much as any lady’s horse could be, and only six years old. I got the daughter of a friend of mine, a girl nine years of age, to ride him about the town, taking care he should be seen by the lady and her good lord. The beauty and docility of the horse in carrying a mere child could not be resisted, so a note arrived filled with apologies for asking if I would sell “le beau cheval,” in which case I was begged to name a price, and to pass my word that he was as docile as he appeared. Monsieur would only ask leave for a friend to look at him in the stable, who would bring the “*argent comptant*.” I replied that I *would* sell the horse, that, on my honour, he was “doux comme un agneau,” a hundred and fifty napoleons his price, and that Monsieur’s friend was quite welcome to see him, assuring Monsieur “de ma parfaite considération,” &c. &c. Yes, thinks I to myself, you are welcome

to *ma parfaite considération*, but I suspect you will not get much consideration for your hundred and fifty. I have the "*Il faut qu'il l'apprenne*" fresh in my memory—*chacun a son tour!* I have not spent so much money about horses without being able to make a broken-winded one fit to be examined by your friend.

'The "*ami*" came; the "*valet d'écurie*" came; the saddle and bridle (such a saddle!—a kind of "*demi-pique*" resuscitated), the bridle half red velvet and silver buckles, came—no matter; the money came. Out of kindness to the horse, I desired the French groom not to give him any cold water that day; those initiated in such matters will know why; the groom did not. *Il faut qu'il l'apprenne*, thinks I. The groom mounted, rode off "*en dragon*," stiff as a poker, Monsieur l'*ami* walking by his side, and, as I saw, Frenchman-like, stopping ten times in the street to show le beau cheval to some friend. *Tout à l'heure, tout à l'heure*, thought I.

'The next evening the friend waited on me, begging I would go with him to look at the horse. "*Volontiers, Monsieur,*" and away we went. I found him, of course, blowing away like a blacksmith's bellows. What was de *matte*re? *vas de hors indisposé?* "*Eh, non;*" Monsieur says "*il est poussif; voilà tout.*" "*Poussif, poussif!*" cries Monsieur le —. "*Sacré!*—do I hear you right? you say de hors is what you call broke in de wind—do I hear

dat?" "Yes," I said, "you do;" and, thinks I to myself, Madame will hear it too occasionally if she rides him. Monsieur assured me he had no idea of the horse being so when he bought him. I freely expressed my conviction that this was correct. *Vat* was he to do? "*Ce n'est pas mon affaire cela*," said I.

'Doubtless my reader has seen two Frenchmen in a passion; but to see two most passionate ones in a regular white-heat rage is really a treat. Now, says I, for the coup-de-théâtre. I reminded Monsieur of the broken-knee decision; he recognised me in a moment. "Now, Monsieur," says I, "what have you got to say? You wanted *un beau cheval*—you have him; you wanted a docile one—you have that also; I said nothing about his being sound: you have no fault to find with me." "*Mais mille tonnerres!* I no vant de horse broke in de vind, dat go puff, puff, all de day long." "C'est possible," says I, "*mais cela* m'est parfaitement indifferent. You trusted to your friend's judgment." "Bote my friend have no judgment for de horse." "Il faut, Monsieur," said I, making my bow, "*qu'il l'apprenne donc*."'¹

When one horse-dealer deliberately lays himself out to get the better of another in a bargain there is sometimes fun for the spectators; as a rule the horse-dealer's tongue is quite as quick and sharp as

¹ Harry Hieover—*Stable Talk and Table Talk*.

his judgment, and no mercy is shown either in the bargain or the chaff that precedes it. According to an old saying, ‘there is no friendship in horse dealing,’ and here is an instance :

‘ Amongst others who used to hunt with the New Forest hounds was Dicky Wise, a great character, who always rode with a spare stirrup-leather round his neck, for the benefit, he said, of any of his friends in case they should break one. Wise once had a deal with a sporting butcher of Southampton, also a well-known character, one Jack Hewitt, who came from Bath, and horsed one or two coaches. Wise’s horse was a rank roarer, and the butcher’s had an awful spavin, but they agreed to exchange even-handed, without examining each other’s horses. The next day Hewitt went out hunting and found out the roaring, but said nothing about it. The following day Wise rode his horse with the hounds, and, coming down the High Street on his return, he passed the shop, where Hewitt was standing at his door. The horse was going on three legs, and Wise hallooed out to him, “No friendship in horse dealing, Mr. Hewitt—there is no friendship in horse dealing!” Wise was very touchy if anybody found fault with his horses. There was a clergyman who hunted in the New Forest, a tall man, and very plain in the face, with his knees knocking one against the other, and his feet standing wide apart. One day he addressed Wise thus: “That is a very ugly horse you

are on." "Yes, sir," said Dick in his blandest manner; "and I should say beauty was not by when you were dropped!"¹

The canny Scot is sometimes quite a match for the Southron in horse-dealing :

'An anecdote is told of a certain Scotch laird who sold a horse to an Englishman, saying, "You buy him as you see him; but he's an *honest* beast." The purchaser took him home. In a few days he stumbled and fell, to the damage of his own knees and his rider's head. On this the angry purchaser remonstrated with the laird, whose reply was, "Well, sir, I told you he was an honest beast! Many a time he has threatened to come down with me, and I kenned *he would keep his word some day.*"'²

The Irishman, according to tradition, should be full of fun, even while taking in his best friend over a horse. But the Irish of late years seem to have either left off being funny, or they don't allow the Saxon to enjoy any of their wit. Charles Lever's horse-loving, hard-riding Irishmen were jolly good fellows, and the individual of whom the following is related must have been one of them :

'We had a rather humorous adventure here—the plains of Roscommon abound with them. A cockney sportsman was amongst us who had bought an 'oss two days previous to the hunt. There was as bad a

¹ *Baily's Magazine*, June 1874.

² *Sport at Home and Abroad*—Lord W. Lennox.

speculation in the animal's eye as there was in the purchaser's bargain; and he had a trifling thickness in breath, that the Irish dealer *said* was only a *cowl*, that he required a good breathing to get in tune and upon the top of his speed. He had also a bit of a blemish on one knee, but the horse-jockey assured the cockney that it was only a mark in his coat. In short, the 'oss was a rip, and at the first stiff leap he came to he shot his rider over his head, broke the other knee, girths and bridle all together. The cockney was much bruised, and threatened the seller with a law-suit, appealing at the same time to his conscience, how he could sell such a horse as sound, and how he could praise him up as he did. "Upon my word," says Pat, "and that's as good as my bond, he is as sound as a bell, for he'll go whenever you touch him; and as for his character, all I said was that he would *run against* any horse or mare you could bring into the field; and as for a leaper—*let him alone for that!*" The case was hopeless.¹

Even grave lawyers and judges seem to grow extra witty when a horse-dealing case is before the court. A horse-coping case was tried in the Court of Common Pleas in 1804, and in the course of the trial Lord Alvanley, the Lord Chief Justice, told the following story:

'Some years ago,' said his lordship, 'an action

¹ *Sporting Magazine*, January 1832.

was brought against a gentleman at the bar respecting a horse which he had bought to go the circuit upon. The horse was taken home, and his servant mounted him to show his paces. When he was on the animal's back he would not stir a step; he tried to turn him *round* and *round*, but he was determined not to go the circuit. The horse-dealer was informed of the horse's obstinacy, and asked by the purchaser how he came to sell him such a horse? "Well," said the dealer, "it can't be helped. Give me back the horse, allow me five pounds, and we'll settle the matter." The barrister refused, and advised him to send the horse to be broke in by a rough-rider. "Rough-rider!" said the dealer, "he has been to rough-riders enough." "How came you to sell me a horse that would not go?" rejoined the barrister. "I sold you a horse warranted sound, and sound he is," concluded the dealer; "but as for his going—I never thought he would go."'¹

Another case of more recent date is thus reported in a well-known sporting periodical:

'Mr. Henry Greaves, who used to take a country as Mr. E. T. Smith would take a theatre, hunted the Vale of White Horse country in 1861. Mr. Greaves was a giant—a tremendously heavy man. In a horse case tried at Oxford he was called as a witness to prove that the horse about which they were bringing

¹ *Fashion Then and Now*—Lord W. Lennox.

the action (which was for a breach of warranty) was a roarer. Mr. Huddleston was the counsel who cross-examined him. Mr. Greaves proved that he rode the horse, and that he roared directly he was set going. Mr. Huddleston, manipulating his kid gloves as was his wont, giving a look at Mr. Greaves (who filled the witness-box, and towered far above the usual standard of witnesses), and making a furtive wink at the jury, asked, "Did the horse roar, sir, before you got on him?" "No," was the innocent reply, "certainly not." "Indeed," replied the leader of the circuit, "he couldn't have known you meant to ride him, or else he would have roared pretty loudly." Shouts of laughter followed this sally, in which the good-natured, jolly welter-weight joined.'¹

¹ *Baily's Magazine*, February 1873

CHAPTER XVIII.

HORSE-STEALING ANECDOTES.

HORSE stealing is a crime of considerable antiquity in England, where it has always been regarded as deserving very severe punishment.

Holinshed mentions in his 'Chronicles' that during the reign of Queen Elizabeth a noted horse-stealer named Ditch was apprehended, charged upon nineteen indictments, eighteen of which he confessed to. It appears that between the time of his apprehension and the sessions 'he appeached many of stealing horses, whereof many of them were taken up, and ten of them condemned and hung at Smithfield, on horse-market day,'—a day specially selected, we presume, in order that the warning and example to such-like evil-doers should be the more notorious and efficacious amongst the fraternity. This man Ditch was evidently possessed of the full cunning peculiar to his tribe, as it is said he practised the dodge of acting also the part of common informer, by helping many to recover their stolen horses, charging as a fee ten shillings each, whereby, as

Holinshed says, ‘he made fifteen pounds of current money towards his charges.’

In olden times Smithfield was the principal horse mart of London, and, till the cattle market was finally removed from the city, copers of the worst kind congregated there.

‘Monsieur Rosetti says the Arabians have five distinct breeds of horses, and that some of these animals are so sensible as never to suffer themselves to be delivered up to a purchaser until the ceremony has been completed by the seller, of having received a little salt, and a morsel of bread! We presume this bread must be something like that formerly sold weekly at Smithfield, where it is customary, and almost imperative, to insure “good luck,” that the seller should treat the buyer with something more potent and palatable than salt. We have heard of two of these chapmen who invoked good luck by such potent libations to the jolly god that they at length quarrelled on the subject of their several identities; the original seller fancying himself the buyer, and the real purchaser as stoutly maintaining that he was the seller. Some humane friend to the parties (it seems Smithfield abounded with such), by walking off with both the horse and the purchase-money, ended the dispute, which convinces us that their Bacchanalian patron must have been offended either by the scantiness or the ill-use of their offerings.’¹

¹ Blaine's *Encyclopædia of Rural Sports*.

In the wilder parts of America Judge Lynch settles accounts with horse-thieves, who are held in detestation. In more civilised states the crime is severely punished, though by a regular tribunal. A cute Yankee once got back a large sum of money by making a charge of horse-stealing against his defrauder, as is pleasantly related by Sam Slick :

‘Felix Foyle lived in the back part of the State of New York, and carried on a smart chance of business in the provision line. Beef and pork and flour was his staples, and he did a great stroke in ’em. Perhaps he did so to the tune of four hundred thousand dollars a year, more or less. Well, in course, in such a trade as that, he had to employ a good many folks as clerks and salters and agents, and what-not, and among them was his book-keeper, Sossipater Cuddy. Sossipater (or Sassy, as folks used to call him, for he was rather high in the instep, and was Sassy by name, and Sassy by natur’ too,)—well, Sassy was a cute man, a good judge of cattle, a grand hand at a bargain, and a’most an excellent scholar at figures. He was ginerally allowed to be a first-rate business man. Only to give you an idee, now, of that man’s smartness, how ready and up to the notch he was at all times, I must jist stop fust and tell you the story of the cigar.

‘In some of our towns we don’t allow smokin’ in the streets, though in most on ’em we do, and where it’s agin the law it is two dollars fine in a gineral

way. Well, Sassy went down to Bosten to do a little chore of business there, where this law was, only he didn't know of it. So, as soon as he gets off the coach, he outs with his case, takes a cigar, lights it, and walks on smokin' like a furnace-flue. No sooner said than done. Up steps constable and sais, "I trouble you for two dollars for smokin' agin law in the street." Sassy was as quick as wink on him. "Smokin'!" sais he, "I warn't a smokin'." "Oh my!" sais constable, "how you talk, man. I won't say you lie, because it ain't polite, but it's very like the way I talk when I lie. Didn't I see you with my own eyes?" "No," sais Sassy, "you didn't. It don't do always to believe your own eyes; they can't be depended on more nor other people's. I never trust mine, I can tell you. I own I had a cigar in my mouth, but it was because I like the flavour of tobacco, but not to smoke. I take it it don't convene with the dignity of a free and enlightened citizen of our almighty nation to break the law, seein' that he makes the law himself, and is his own sovereign and his own subject too. No, I warn't smokin', and if you don't believe me try this cigar yourself and see if it ain't so. It hante got no fire in it." Well, constable takes the cigar, puts it into his mug, and draws away, and out comes the smoke like anythin'.

"I'll trouble you for two dollars, Mr. High Sheriff devil," sais Sassy, "for smokin' in the

streets ; do you underconstand, my old coon ? ” Well, constable was all taken aback, he was finely bit. “ Stranger,” sais he, “ where was you raised ? ” “ To Canady line,” sais Sassy. “ Well,” sais he, “ you’re a credit to your broughtens up. Well, let the fine drop, for we are about even, I guess. Let’s liquor ; ” and he took him into a bar and treated him to a mint julep. It was generallly considered a great bite that, and I must say I don’t think it was bad. But to get back to where I started from. Sassy, as I was a-sayin’, was the book-keeper of old Felix Foyle. The old gentleman sot great store by him, and couldn’t do without him on no account, he was so ready like, and always on hand. But Sassy thought he could do without him though. So one fine day he absgotilated with four thousand dollars in his pocket, of Felix’s, and cut dirt for Canady as hard as he could chip. Felix Foyle was actilly in a most beautiful frizzle of a fix. He knew who he had to deal with, and that he might as well follow a fox almost as Sassy, he was so everlastin’ cunnin’, and that the British wouldn’t give up a debtor to us, but only felons ; so he thought the fust loss was the best, and was about givin’ it up as a bad job, when an idee struck him, and off he started in chase with all steam on. Felix was the clear grit when his dander was up, and he never slept, night or day, till he reached Canady too, got on the trail of Sassy, and came up to where he was airted at Niagara. When

he arrived it was about noon, so as he enters the tavern he sees Sassy standing with his face to the fire and his back to the door, and what does he do but slip into the meal-room and hide himself till night. Just as it was dark in comes old Bambrick, the innkeeper, with a light in his hand, and Felix slips behind him, shuts to the door, and tells him the whole story from beginning to end; how Sassy had served him; and lists the old fellow in his service, and off they set to a magistrate and get out a warrant, and then they goes to the deputy-sheriff, and gets Sassy arrested. Sassy was so taken aback, he was hardly able to speak for a minute or two, for he never expected Felix would follow him into Canady at all, seein' that if he oncet reached British soil he was safe. But he soon come to again, so he ups and bullies. "Pray sir," sais he, "what do you mean by this?" "Nothin' above partikelar," sais Felix, quite cool; "only I guess I want the pleasure of your company back, that's all;" and then turnin' to the onder sheriff, "Squire," sais he, "will you take a turn or two in the entry, while Sassy and I settle a little matter of business together?" and out goes Nab. "Mr. Foyle," sais Sassy, "I have no business to settle with you—arrest me, sir, at your peril, and I'll action you in law for false imprisonment." "Where's my money," sais Felix; "where's my four thousand dollars?" "What do I know about your money?" sais Sassy. "Well," sais

Felix, "it is your business to know, and I paid you as my book-keeper to know, and if you don't know you must jest return with me and find out, that's all—so come, let us be movin'." Well, Sassy larfed right out in his face. "Why, you cussed fool," sais he, "don't you know I can't be taken out o' this colony state but only for crime? What a rael soft-horn you must be to have done so much business and not know that!" "I guess I got a warrant that'll take you out, tho'," sais Felix; "read that,"—a handin' the paper to him. "Now I shall swear to that agin, and send it to governor, and down will come the marchin' order in quick stick. I'm soft, I know, but I ain't sticky, for all that; I generally come off clear, without leavin' no part behind." The moment Sassy saw the warrant his face fell, and the cold perspiration rose out like rain-drops, and his colour went and came, and his knees shook like anythin'. "Hoss-stealin'!" sais he aloud to himself—"hoss-stealin'!—heavens and airth, what perjury! Why, Felix," sais he, "you know devilish well I never stole your hoss, man; how could you go and swear to such an infarnal lie as that?" "Well, I'm nothin' but a 'cussed fool' and a rael 'soft-horn' you know," sais Felix, "as you said just now; and if I had gone and sworn to the debt, why you'd a-kept the money, gone to jail, and swore out, and I'd a-had my trouble for my pains. So you see I swore you stole my hoss, for that's a crime, though absquotolatin'.

ain't, and that will force the British governor to deliver you up; and when I get you into New York State, why you settle with me for my four thousand dollars, and I will settle with you for stealin' my hoss;" and he put his finger to the tip end of his nose, and winked, and said, "young folks think old folks is fools, but old folks *know* young folks is fools. I warn't born yesterday, and I had my eye-teeth sharpened before your'n were through the gums, I guess. You hante got the Bosten constable to deal with now, I can tell you, but old Felix Foyle himself, and he ain't so blind but what he can feel his way along, I guess—do you take my meanin', my young coon?" "I'm sold," sais Sassy, and he sot down, put both elbows on the table, and covered his face with his hands and fairly cried like a child. "I'm sold," sais he. "Buy your pardon, then," sais Felix. "Pay down the four thousand dollars and you are a free and enlightened citizen once more." Sassy got up and unlocked his portmanteau, and counted it all out in paper rolls just as he received it. "Thar it is," sais he, "and I must say you deserve it. That was a great stroke o' your'n." "Stop a bit," sais Felix, seein' more money there, all his savin's for years, "we ain't done yet. I must have 500 dollars for expenses." "There, d—n you," sais Sassy, throwin' another roll at him,—“there it is; are you done yet?" "No," sais Felix, "not yet; now you have done me justice, I must do you the same, and

clear your character. Call in that gentleman the constable from the entry, and I will go a treat of half-a-pint of brandy. Mr. Officer," sais Felix, "here is some mistake; this gentleman has convinced me he was only follerin', as my clerk, a debtor of mine here, and when he transacts his bus'ness, will return, having left his hoss at the lines, where I can get him if I choose; and I must say I am glad on't, for the credit o' the nation abroad. Fill your glass; here's a five-dollar bill to your fees, and here's to your good health. If you want provision to ship off in the way of trade, I'm Felix Foyle, and shall be happy to accommodate you."

"Now," said Mr. Slick, "that is what I call a rael clever trick, a great card, warn't it? He deserves credit, does Felix; it ain't every one would a-been up to trap that way, is it?"

"Sam," said his father, rising with great dignity and formality of manner, "was that man, Felix Foyle, ever a military man?"

"No, sir; he never had a commission, even in the militia, as I knows on."

"I thought not," said the colonel. "No man that had seen military life could ever tell a lie, much less take a false oath. That fellow, sir, is a villain, and I wish Washington and I had him to the halberts; by the 'tarnal we'd teach him to disgrace our great name before those benighted colonists."'¹

¹ *Sam Slick—The Attaché*, vol. i.

This affair terminated pleasantly for every one except the poor wretch who had to disgorge his ill-gained wealth ; but when Judge Lynch presides over the court before which the horse-thief is brought, the business is finished in such a rapid manner that there is little chance of the culprit escaping ; and it happens occasionally that an innocent man suffers. As an instance of a tragic trial for horse stealing, Mr. Clarence King, of the United States Geological Survey, thus reports a horse-stealing trial in California :

‘Early in the fifties, on a still, hot summer’s afternoon, a certain man, in the camp of the northern mines which shall be nameless, having tracked his two donkeys and one horse a half-mile, and discovering that a man’s track with spur-marks followed them, came back to town and told “the boys” who loitered about a popular saloon that in his opinion “some Mexican had stolen the animals.”

‘Such news as this naturally demanded drinks all round. “Do you know, gentlemen,” said one who assumed leadership, “that just naturally to shoot these Greasers ain’t the best way. Give ’em a fair jury trial, and rope ’em up with all the majesty of law. That’s the cure.”

‘Such words of moderation were well received, and they drank again to “here’s hoping we ketch that Greaser.”

‘As they loafed back again to the verandah, a

Mexican walked over the hill brow, jingling his spurs pleasantly in accord with a whistled waltz. The advocate for law said in an undertone, "That's the cuss."

'A rush, a struggle, and the Mexican, bound hand and foot, lay on his back in the bar-room. Happily such cries as "String him up!" "Burn the doggoned lubricator!" and other equally pleasant phrases, fell unheeded upon his Spanish ear.

'A jury, upon which they forced my friend, was quickly gathered in the street, and despite refusals to serve, the crowd hurried them in behind the bar. A brief statement of the case was made by the *ci-devant* advocate, and they shoved the jury into a commodious poker-room, where seats were grouped about neat green tables. The noise outside the bar-room by-and-by died away into complete silence, but from afar down the cañon came confused sounds as of disorderly cheering.

'They came nearer, and again the light-hearted noise of human laughter mingled with clinking glasses. A low knock at the door of the jury-room; the lock burst in, and a dozen smiling fellows asked the verdict.

'A foreman promptly replied, "*Not guilty.*"

'With volleyed oaths and ominous laying of hands on pistol-hilts, the boys slammed the door, with "You'll have to do better than that!"

'In half an hour the advocate opened the door again.

“Your *opinion*, gentlemen?”

“Guilty!”

“Correct! You can come out.” We hung him an hour ago.

‘The jury took “theirs neat,” and when after a few minutes the pleasant village returned to its former tranquillity, it was “allowed” at more than one saloon that “Mexicans ’ll know enough to let white men’s stock alone after this.” One after another exchanged the belief that this sort of thing was more sensible than “nipping ’em on sight.”

‘When, before sunset, the bar-keeper concluded to sweep some dust out of his poker-room back door, he felt a momentary surprise at finding the missing horse dozing under the shadow of an oak, and the two lost donkeys serenely masticating playing-cards, of which many bushels lay in a dusty pile. He was reminded then that the animals had been there all day.’¹

The records of Judge Lynch’s court are but imperfectly kept, or doubtless many other equally tragic blunders could be related. In some cases the stolen horse was made executioner; the culprit’s arms were bound behind his back, he was mounted on the horse, a rope depending from a tree being fastened round his neck. When the horse moved on the thief was left hanging.

The Indians of North America are great horse

¹ *Mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada*, by Clarence King.

thieves, and some account of their exploits and manner of thieving has been given by an Englishman who travelled much on the prairie.

‘ On rising we heard that a small party of Ricaras had carried off twenty-six of our horses during the night, including two of mine, one of which broke away from them and returned ; but one of them, a venerable gray, remained in the hands of the captors. Soon after our departure from Fort Leavenworth, our American lad, who was a merry wag, named the pack horses and mules after the public men of the day, according to his opinion of their respective merits and qualities. It was impossible to avoid a smile when I overheard some of his objurgations, as he was driving them up in the rear:—“ Come up, General ! ” “ Who, ho, Van Buren—your pack is all one side.” “ Go it, Henry Clay—old Kentuck for ever ! ” &c. I believe it was General Jackson that remained a Ricara prisoner. How they ever succeeded in making him move I cannot imagine, as all our instruments of persuasion, from a spur to a cowhide, could only extract a very small jog-trot, and that for a short time. Nevertheless, he must have been forced off at some speed, as a few Pawnees pursued for many miles in the morning without success.

‘ The manner in which they (the Ricaras) steal horses is as follows : Two or three men approach the encampment cautiously soon after nightfall, and take

advantage of any creek, dell, or brushwood that may serve to conceal them from the observation of the out-pickets; if they succeed in reaching the extremity of the village undiscovered, they stand up and walk deliberately through it, wrapped in their buffalo robes. They can no longer be distinguished from the Pawnees by the faint light of the half-extinguished fires; and as they pass the groups of horses collected before their respective owners' lodges, they cut with a sharp knife the laryettes that secure those they purpose to carry off. As soon as they have loosened the required number, each man jumps upon one, and they drive off the rest at full speed, shaking their blankets and urging the alarmed animals to their utmost exertions. Of course they obtain a considerable start of any pursuit, and, if the night is dark, run but little risk of being overtaken.

'The manner of securing horses on the prairie against these depredators is twofold; either to tie them by a laryette passed round the neck; or to "*hobble*" them, which is effected by tying the fore-legs close together, by leather thongs passed round them, below the knee-joint. This latter is the safer plan, because a thief can sometimes cut the laryette as he walks, without risk of observation; but if he stoops down to untie or cut a strong leather thong between the shins of a horse, he not only runs more risk of alarming the animal, but incurs suspicion from any one who may happen to be lying awake in

the neighbourhood. In cases where there is a probability of such an attempt, it is better both to tie and hobble them.

‘The following day the chiefs assembled and sat in council many hours, discussing the expediency of reprisals. The subject afforded a wide field for discussion, as the United States, in the stipulation for paying the annuities for ceded lands, exacted from the Pawnees that they should not send out parties to steal horses, as had been their practice. In the meantime the more distant tribes came in to hunt in the buffalo prairies and steal the Pawnees’ horses, while the latter are forbidden to make reprisals. These stipulations would be very hard *if adhered to*; but I have good reason to believe that during my residence with the Pawnees they sent out several horse-stealing parties, one of which was supposed to have met with considerable success among the Kansas Indians, a tribe settled on the river of the same name. The Indian notions of reprisals are very cosmopolitan; if thirty horses are stolen from them and they cannot discover the thieves, they consider themselves perfectly justified in stealing thirty from the first party or tribe that may offer them the opportunity.’¹

At the present time in England the crime of horse stealing is comparatively rare, though occasion-

¹ Hon. C. A. Murray—*Travels in North America*.

ally a notice against a police-station wall, or a newspaper advertisement, tells us that it has not entirely died out. The best plan is for those who possess valuable horses to remember the old adage—‘It is no use locking the stable door when the steed is stolen.’

CHAPTER XIX.

INSTINCT, POWER OF MEMORY AND DOCILITY OF THE HORSE.

OF the cleverness of the horse, how he remembers benefits and injuries, and how he oftentimes learns to anticipate his rider's will, many tales are told. 'Perhaps no animal in man's employment more thoroughly understands what he is about than the "stock horse" of New South Wales. From the earliest period of his breaking he is taught to wheel instantly when at full speed on any ground; and from the innate sagacity which horses have in discerning their rider's object, one that has been "after stock" for a year or two reaches such perfection in this point as almost to justify the ordinary recommendation of an Australian horse-dealer, that "he can turn upon a cabbage-leaf." The best exemplification of this faculty is the process of driving, or as it is called, "cutting out" a single bullock, to which he will not submit without a sharp tussle, from the instinctive dislike to separation which all the bush cattle exhibit. At first starting he trusts wholly to

his speed, but, finding after a trial of two or three hundred yards, that his retreat to the herd is still intercepted, he doubles round in the rear of his pursuer, who, were he to continue his onward career, would thereby lose a great deal of ground ; but such is the agility of the stock-horse that he simultaneously wheels round, and still keeps on the inside without losing an inch. This kind of thing is repeated again and again, till the baffled bullock is fain to take any course his tormentor may direct.’¹

In submission to a master the horse is affected by kind treatment almost as much as the dog and elephant ; for although habitually his actions show timidity, they are more an effect of good temper than fear ; for where severity is unreasonably exercised, obedience, which is readily granted to kind treatment, becomes doubtful, and sooner or later breaks out in vicious resentment and opposition. A horse knows its own strength, and oppression has its limits. ‘In emulation to surpass a rival no more convincing instance can be cited than in the case of a racehorse finding his competitor beginning to head him in the course, seizing him by the fore-leg with such firm teeth, that both jockeys were obliged to dismount to part them. This was a horse of Mr. Quin’s in 1753. Forester, another racer, caught his antagonist by the jaw to hold him back. Surely such animals should

¹ Haygarth’s *Bush Life*.

not be gored with the spur or cut with the whip to do their utmost.’¹

But the sagacious animal expects that his master or rider shall be fully competent to perform his share of the business. A horse soon learns to despise a timid rider.

‘The confidence of a horse in a firm rider and his own courage is great, as was conspicuously evinced in the case of an Arab possessed by the late General Sir Robert R. Gillespie, who being present on the race-course of Calcutta during one of the great Hindu festivals, when several hundred thousand people may be assembled to witness all kinds of shows, was suddenly alarmed by the shrieks of the crowd, and informed that a tiger had escaped from his keeper. Sir Robert immediately called for his horse, and grasping a boar-spear which was in the hands of one of the crowd, rode to attack this formidable enemy. The tiger probably was amazed at finding himself in the middle of such a number of shrieking beings, flying from him in all directions; but the moment he perceived Sir Robert, he crouched with the attitude of preparing to spring at him, and that instant the gallant soldier passed his horse in a leap over the tiger’s back, and struck the spear through his spine. The horse was a small gray, afterwards sent home by him a present to the Prince

¹ *The Naturalist’s Library—Horses*, by Lieutenant-Colonel Chas. Hamilton Smith.

Regent. When Sir Robert fell at the storming of Kalunga, his favourite black charger, bred at the Cape of Good Hope, and carried by him to India, was, at the sale of his effects, competed for by several officers of his division, and finally knocked down to the privates of the 8th Dragoons, who contributed their prize-money to the amount of 500*l.* sterling to retain this commemoration of their late commander. Thus the charger was always led at the head of the regiment on a march; and at the station of Cawnpore was indulged with taking his ancient station at the colour-stand, where the salute of passing squadrons was given at drill and on reviews. When the regiment was ordered home, the funds of the privates running low, he was bought for the same sum by a relative of ours, who provided funds and a paddock for him, where he might end his days in comfort; but when the corps had marched, and the sound of trumpet had departed, he refused to eat; and on the first opportunity, being led out to exercise, he broke from his groom, and galloping to his ancient station on the parade, after neighing aloud, dropped down and died.¹

The pressure of the rider's limbs, the feel of the hand on the bridle, may even serve a horse instead of the sense of sight. Blind horses are by no means uncommon, and some of them do daily work

¹ *The Naturalist's Library—Horses*, by Lieutenant-Colonel Chas. Hamilton Smith.

without being much inconvenienced by the want of sight, if the rider or driver is patient and steady.

‘I remember many years back my old acquaintance and infallible doctor, Mr. Minster, of Cheltenham, having a very fine old gray hunter, stone blind; and when visiting his patients he would often cross the country by the footpaths, leaping the stone stiles with ease and safety. Being one day with a dashing young farmer who was boasting of the feats *his* horse could perform, the doctor took the shine out of him on the instant by proposing a wager that *he* had a horse in his stable which could take a leap the farmer’s horse could not.

“Where shall we go to decide the bet?” said the farmer, who of course had said “done.”

“Only into the street,” replied the other.

‘Consequently the doctor was mounted on the blind horse in a trice, when giving him the office by the bit (and as Horace says, *there lies the horse’s ear*), he made him believe a stone stile was before him, and he took a spring that would have cleared the highest in the parish, to the no small discomfiture of the farmer.’¹

And when well treated the horse is capable of great affection for the biped who rides or drives him; the animal will show a great deal of ingenuity in

¹ “Nimrod”—*Hunting Reminiscences*.

protecting his master from danger—witness the following “Instance of Docility!”

‘A farmer was remarkable for two qualities—attachment to animals and getting tipsy. The horse he usually rode, or rather the one that usually walked by his side like a dog—for he seldom rode him—had been brought up by him from a foal. Once every week the owner went to a market some seven or eight miles distant from his home, and as invariably came home the worse for liquor, his potations in such cases being usually varied by sundry slumbers in the middle of the road. The horse was always by his side, and if any one approached, a warning neigh gave notice to be wary; no accident to the master ever occurred.

‘One night a farmer of the neighbourhood was coming home, when the well-known neigh informed him that J—— was asleep in the mud. Determined to test the sagacity of the horse, he removed the tipsy man from the middle of the road to the close vicinity of a ditch half-filled with water, placing him in a position so that he nearly touched the water. He then remounted his own horse, rode onwards a short distance, when he tied his horse to a gate and returned to watch the result, which he found to be that the intoxicated man was lying far from the ditch where he had left him; having had his coat torn by the teeth of his own horse when dragging him out of danger of drowning. The tipsy farmer’s horse, which

had previously been very friendly towards the experimenter, could not afterwards be brought to notice him otherwise than with aversion.’¹

An instance of vindictive memory may follow here, showing how the horse remembers those who ill-treat him.

‘I will relate a little circumstance which took place in Mexico a few years before I left there. One of my friends had a horse extremely gentle, and of such an easy agreeable gait, that he took the greatest care of him, and held him at a great price. A well-fed, big and lusty friar was a friend to our neighbour: one who liked the good things of this world, as well as he liked to ride out to the small towns bordering upon the city of Mexico, and take a dinner with the bonny lasses and countrymen inhabiting those villages. He used to ask my friend to loan him his horse to take these excursions just around the capital; and, as his requests were granted with so good a grace, he, in a short time, went so far as to ask the loan of this favourite animal to go to Cuernavaca, a distance of eighteen leagues. As this happened pretty often, our friend complained to me one day of the indiscretion of the friar. I asked him if he could procure me a friar’s dress for a few days, and leave his horse with me for the same time. He did so. I dressed myself in the friar’s dress and

¹ Youatt—*The Horse*

went in where the horse was. I took a good whip in my hand and made him do penance for no other sin but that of too much gentleness. Going out, I took off my friar's dress and went in again in my own dress, and handled him gently. I repeated the operation a few days, at the end of which I took the horse back to his master, and told him he might lend him to the friar whenever he pleased. A day or two after he came to my store. "Your remedy," said he, "has had a marvellous effect. Our monk has just left my house, perfectly persuaded that my horse is possessed with the devil. For when the holy personage came up to take him by the bridle to get on him, he was so frightened, and wheeled round so quick, and flew away from him with so much terror, that one would have said he took him for the destroying angel." The friar crossed himself many times, hurried away in all haste to the convent to sprinkle himself with holy water, and never asked my friend for his horse again.' ¹

In this case the horse remembered the dress, not the features of the individual who used the whip on him. But horses can remember features as well as costumes.

'The late General Pater of the East India Service was a remarkably fat man. While stationed at Madras he purchased a charger, which, after a short trial, all at once betook himself to a trick of lying

¹ *Tachyhippodamia*, by W. J. Pellow.

down whenever the general prepared to get upon his back. Every expedient was tried, without success, to cure him of the trick, and the laugh was so much against the general's corpulency that he found it convenient to dispose of his horse to a young officer quitting the settlement for a distant station up the country. Upwards of two years had subsequently elapsed when, in execution of his official duties, General Pater left Madras to inspect one of the frontier cantonments. He travelled, as is the custom in India, in his palankeen. The morning after his arrival at the station the troops were drawn out, and, as he had brought no horses, it was proper to provide for his being suitably mounted, though it was not very easy to find a charger equal to his weight. At length an officer resigned to him a powerful horse for the occasion, which was brought out, duly caparisoned, in front of the line. The general came forth from his tent, and proceeded to mount; but the instant the horse saw him advance he flung himself flat upon the sand, and neither blows nor entreaties could induce him to rise. *It was the general's old charger*, who from the moment of quitting his service had never once practised the artifice until this second meeting. The general, who was an exceedingly good-humoured man, joined heartily in the universal shout that ran through the whole line on witnessing this ludicrous affair.¹

¹ *Penny Magazine*, vol. ix.

The tricks of horses to procure little luxuries and indulgences are very clever.

‘An orchard had been repeatedly stripped of its best and ripest fruit, and the marauders had laid their plans so cunningly that the strictest vigilance could not detect them. At last the depredators were discovered to be a mare and her colt which were turned out to graze among the trees. The mare was seen to go up to one of the apple-trees, and to throw herself against the trunk so violently that a shower of ripe apples came tumbling down. She and her offspring then ate the fallen apples, and the same process was repeated at another tree. Another mare had discovered the secret of the water-butt, and, whenever she was thirsty, was accustomed to go to the butt, turn the tap with her teeth, drink until her thirst was satisfied, and then to close the tap again. I have heard of two animals which performed this feat ; but one of them was not clever enough to turn the tap back again, and used to let all the water run to waste.’¹

¹ Rev. J. G. Wood—*Illustrated Natural History*.

CHAPTER XX.

ECCENTRIC LITERARY AND CLERICAL HORSEMEN.

LITERATURE has produced a few equestrian curiosities. So has the Church. The typical fox-hunting parson has his opposite.

An absent-minded man was the eccentric poet Bowles, who resided at Bremhill, in Wiltshire. His chief mode of locomotion being on horseback, he was one day met by a friend walking leisurely along the road, book in hand, with the reins of his bridle hanging on his arm, and the head-piece with the bit trailing on the ground behind him.

‘Why, Bowles!’ exclaimed his friend, ‘what has become of your horse?’

‘Behind me,’ was his reply, without taking the trouble to look back.

‘Then he is an uncommon long way behind, Bowles; for I can see a mile of road, but no horse.’

On this occasion, during one of his absent fits, while stopping and taking notes as he proceeded by the wayside, the chin-stay being loose the horse had disengaged the bridle from his head without his

master being aware of his movements. With all his eccentricities and wayside wanderings, nevertheless, Bowles took good care to avoid meeting the foxhounds, although we were continually running through his parish.’¹

‘Archbishop Vernon Harcourt, who was a very fine horseman—and before he was promoted to the bench, always in the first flight when foxhounds were running—once said to the wisest wit of the last generation, “I understand, Mr. Sydney Smith, you object to clergymen riding on horseback.” “Not,” was the reply, “when they ride very badly and turn out their toes.” For Sydney Smith took the *haute école* view of horsemanship.’²

But Sydney Smith’s doctrine was better than his practice, so far as riding was concerned. He certainly at various times kept horses, and even mounted them ; but, after all, Sydney Smith was a very poor horseman. In the words of his daughter, Lady Holland, ‘Either from the badness of his horses or the badness of his riding, or perhaps from both (in spite of his various contrivances to keep himself in the saddle), he had several falls, and kept us in continual anxiety.’ In one of his letters Sydney Smith says : ‘I used to think a fall from a horse dangerous, but much experience has convinced me to the contrary. I have had

¹ *Recollections of a Foxhunter*, by Scrutator.

² S. Sydney—*The Book of the Horse*.

six falls in two years, and behaved just like *the Three per Cents* when they fall. I got up again, and am not a bit the worse for it, any more than the stock in question. . . . I left off riding for the good of my parish and the peace of my family ; for somehow or other my horse and I had a habit of parting company. On one occasion I found myself suddenly prostrate in the streets of York, much to the delight of the dissenters. Another time my horse, "Calamity," flung me over his head into a neighbouring parish, and I felt grateful it was not into a neighbouring planet ; but as no harm came of it, I might have persevered, perhaps, if, on a certain day, a quaker tailor from a neighbouring village to which I had said I was going to ride, had not taken it into his head to call, soon after my departure, and requested to see Mrs. Sydney. She, instantly conceiving I was thrown, if not killed, rushed down to the man, exclaiming, "Where is he ? Where is your master—is he hurt ?" The astonished and quaking snip stood silent from surprise. Still more agitated by his silence, she exclaimed, "Is he hurt ? I insist upon knowing the worst !" "Why, please, ma'am, it is only thy little bill, a very small account, I wanted thee to settle," replied he in much surprise.

‘After this, you may suppose, I sold my horse ; however, it is some comfort to know that my friend, Sir George, is one fall ahead of me, and is certainly a worse rider. It is a great proof, too, of the

liberality of this county, where everybody can ride as soon as they are born, that they tolerate me at all.

‘The horse “Calamity,” whose name has been thus introduced, was the firstborn of several young horses bred on the farm, who turned out very fine creatures, and gained him great glory even amongst the knowing farmers of Yorkshire; but this first production was certainly not encouraging. A huge, lank, large-boned foal appeared, of chestnut colour and with four white legs. It grew apace, but its bones became more and more conspicuous; its appetite was unbounded—grass, hay, corn, beans, food moist and dry, were all supplied in vain, and vanished down his throat with incredible rapidity. He stood a large, living skeleton, with famine written in his face, and my father christened him “Calamity.” As “Calamity” grew to maturity he was found to be as sluggish in disposition as his master was impetuous; so my father was driven to invent his patent “Tantalus,” which consisted of a small sieve of corn suspended on a semicircular bar of iron, from the end of the shafts, just beyond the horse’s nose. The corn rattling as the vehicle proceeded, stimulated “Calamity” to unwonted exertions; and under the hope of overtaking this imaginary feed, he did more work than all the previous provender which had been poured down his throat had been able to obtain from him.’¹

¹ By Lady Holland—*Memoir of the Rev. Sydney Smith.*

Had the witty clergyman been compelled to ride long distances in the discharge of his duties he would probably have learned what Nimrod called the 'art of adhesiveness,' that is, the knack of sticking to his saddle. In the back settlements of America, where ministers of the gospel have to travel long distances on horseback, they become quite knowing in all matters concerning horseflesh. Here is the testimony of a leading American periodical concerning these clerical horsemen :

'There are no better judges of horses than itinerant preachers in the United States. From the very necessities of their calling they are constantly dependent upon their services, and thus, naturally, become acquainted with all their good and bad qualities. We have one of these Backwoods' apostles in our mind's eye, whose circuit was in a south-western state. He was born in Virginia, and I have always suspected that his infant eyes opened upon a race-track. Be that as it may, a certificate of character from him in favour of a horse was of commercial value. Indifferent about his personal comfort and personal appearance, he insisted upon being well mounted, and seemed always ready to "run the good race."

'On one occasion he was pressing his way to a meeting when his progress was obstructed by a crowd in the road, engaged in the preliminaries of a scrub-race. Compelled to stop a moment, he involuntarily examined the cattle entered for the sport, and

spontaneously gave his opinion which one would win. Suddenly remembering that it was the Sabbath, he apologised for his worldly-mindedness and would have passed on, but the crowd had become uproarious, and nothing would do but the parson must stay and see the thing out. After some properly expressed repugnance he consented, on the condition that the Sabbath-breakers would accompany him to church and hear his sermon; this was agreed to without a dissenting voice. The parson fulfilled his contract with commendable zeal, and his constituents acted in like good faith. As a result, to use the language of one of the congregation, "the parson, for their evident wickedness, used a moral currycomb with such coarse teeth that he nearly took all the hair of their self-conceit off their backs." Unfortunately for the lasting effects of the well-timed and excellent discourse, the parson's horse, after the ceremony was over, "took the bit in his mouth and beat everything on the road," in spite of all the owner's endeavours to restrain him. The more sober and discreet brethren professed to believe it was an untoward accident; but the sinners thought there was design in it, and singularly enough the parson's influence was greatly increased among this branch of his congregation.'

CHAPTER XXI.

A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS.

OF course all who have to do with horses are liable to accidents, but it seldom occurs that any one man meets with so many as happened to the late George Talkington, once a celebrated horse-dealer at Uttoxeter, who died on April 8, 1826, at Cheadle in Cheshire, after meeting with more injuries than probably ever befell any other human being.

‘Up to the year 1793 Talkington’s injuries were as follows:—Right shoulder broken; skull fractured and trepanned; three ribs on the left side broken; a severe cut on the forehead; lancet case and knife forced into the thigh; three ribs broken on the right side; the right shoulder, elbow and wrist dislocated; back seriously injured; cap of the right knee kicked off; left ankle dislocated; right ankle dislocated and hip knocked down; seven ribs broken, right and left sides; kicked in the face, and left eye nearly knocked out; the back again seriously injured; two ribs and breast-bone broken; got down

and kicked by a vicious horse till he had five holes in his left leg; the sinew first below the right knee cut through and two holes in that leg, also two shocking cuts above the knee; *seven* times taken apparently dead out of different rivers.

‘Since 1793, when a reference to these accidents was given by Mr. Madely, surgeon, of Uttoxeter, he had the right shoulder dislocated and collar-bone broken; seven ribs broken; breast-bone laid open and right shoulder dislocated; left shoulder dislocated and left arm broken; two ribs broken, and right thigh seriously bruised; in 1819 (being then in his seventy-sixth year) a lacerated wound in the calf of the leg, extending to the foot; mortification of the wound took place, which exposed all the flexor tendons of the foot, also the capsular ligaments of the ankle-joint; he became delirious and so continued three weeks; his wonderful recovery from this accident was attributed chiefly to the circumstance of a friend having supplied him with a quantity of old Madeira, a glass of which he took every two hours for eight weeks, and afterwards occasionally. Since then, in 1823, being in his eightieth year, he had a mortification of the second toe of the right foot, with exfoliation of the bone, from which he recovered, and at last died of old age in his eighty-third year. He was the father of eighteen children by one wife in fifteen years, all of

whom he survived, and he married again at the age of seventy-four.’¹

Talkington’s accidents were all received in the way of business. But it sometimes happens that a young gentleman has no business to get into such troubles as Sir G. Stephen relates in the following:—

‘I have occasionally met with young gentlemen—very young gentlemen—who affect to prefer a brute with a queer temper “because he will do most work.” These pinafore riders “never find a horse too much for *them*,” &c. When I hear this, I set it down, as of course, that the speaker has never been on horseback a second time in his life, or at all events never mounted a second horse. It is digressing a little from the subject, but I cannot resist the temptation of mentioning an adventure I had a few years since with a jackanapes of this description. He overtook me one afternoon riding home from the City; he was mounted on a good mare, but with vice legibly written on her face. He was obviously uncomfortable, and I advised him to dismount. “Oh, no; never liked a horse better! She is rather queer, to be sure, but I am *riding her into order*, for a friend who finds her too much for him.” I was not his nurse, so I said no more. Presently he dropped his stick; I offered to hold the mare while he re-

¹ *Oxford and University Herald*, April 29, 1826.

covered it, but I found that he dared not dismount, as he could not be assured of reseating himself. I foresaw the catastrophe ; no sooner had I given him his cane, than, to show his courage, he applied it to his mare, and away she went like a bullet. To give chase to a runaway horse is the unkindest service in the world. I followed at my leisure ; the youth was going to a dinner-party, and I thought the worst that would happen would be his arriving in time to cook the dinner.

‘At Islington, an old woman was “flaring up” like a fury ; an orange barrow overturned, and oranges scattered to the winds, bespoke the nature of her provocation ; she had escaped by a miracle. A hundred yards further, a costermonger’s cart showed symptoms of unwonted distress—cabbages, carrots, and potatoes strewed the ground, while the owner vented his indignant wrath in wishes that my unhappy friend might finish his career in the shades below. Misfortunes thickened as I traced his steps ; a mob at Battle-bridge surrounded the toll-collector ; a good-natured attempt to close the gate had exposed his limbs to serious risk, though it had not saved his penny ; the man was quit for a bloody nose ; and a fish-woman for the trouble of washing her soles a second time. I followed in dismay. A quarter of a mile further, two stanhopes going in opposite directions had come in direct collision, four gentlemen were just recovering their legs, and

gaping round in bewilderment at the sudden apparition of Tam o' Shanter the Second; their horses had taken fright at the clatter of the mare, and, emulating her good example, bolted too and met in full career.

'At Tottenham Court Road the dandy's hat had taken leave. I tracked its owner like a fox, guided by countless accidents, till I arrived at Paddington, and there, emerging from a bed of savoury *slush*, I found him! He was in truth well equipped for the hero of a drawing-room! He had pitched head foremost into one of those luscious quagmires which our road-sweepers sometimes accumulate at the road-sides. The mud formed a rich pomatum for his curly head; the pillory could not have worked a more complete metamorphosis.

'“Carry the gemman to the pump!” was the general cry, and certainly his folly deserved it. I called a coach just in time to save him from friends and foes, for on retracing my route I encountered orange-women, costermongers, gentlemen and fish-fags, all in full cry, like a pack of beagles.’¹

But even on the racecourse it does sometimes happen that accidents of the most extraordinary nature occur. For instance, it could scarcely be imagined that a helmet should kill a horse going at full speed, without injuring the wearer of it; yet

¹ Sir G. Stephens—*Adventures of a Gentleman in Search of a Horse*.

such a thing happened, as is related by a magazine whose position places the authority of the story beyond a doubt.

‘A most extraordinary accident happened some years ago on the Chester racecourse. A colt called Hairbreadth, by Escape, the property of the late Mr. Lockley, bolted over the ropes, and coming in contact with an officer of dragoons, Sir John Miller, who was on horseback, was killed by the peak of the helmet entering his skull *when on the head of the baronet*, who escaped with a trifling injury.’¹

The Arabs, clever horsemen as they are, are quite as liable to accident as English grooms. But the Arab likes to be kicked by a thoroughbred horse, and cannot endure to be put to any pain by an animal whose pedigree is at all defective.

An English surgeon had been setting the broken leg of an Arab, who complained more of the accident that had befallen him than was thought becoming in one of his tribe: this the surgeon remarked to him, and his answer was truly characteristic. ‘Do not think, Doctor, I should have uttered a word of complaint if my own high-bred colt, in a playful kick, had broken both my legs; but to have a bone broken by a brute of a *jackass* is too bad, and I *will* complain.’²

The kick of one horse is bad enough, but what

¹ *Quarterly Review*, No. xcvi.

² *Pentley's Magazine*, 1852.

must it be when thousands of them run wild, and frightened to a point when no human being can control them, run wildly over the country. In America and other countries, where wild horses are common, it sometimes happens that, by accident, a herd of wild horses gets frightened, and then occurs a scene something like that described by the Hon. C. A. Murray, in his book of travels :

‘ About an hour after the usual time at which the horses were brought in for the night, hobbled and otherwise secured near the tents and fires of their respective owners, an indistinct sound arose, like the muttering of distant thunder. As it approached it became mingled with the howling of all the dogs in the encampment, and with the shouts and yells of the Indians. In coming nearer it rose high above all these accompaniments, and resembled the lashing of a heavy surf upon a beach. On and on it rolled towards us, and partly from my own hearing, partly from the hurried words and actions of the tenants of our lodge, I gathered that it must be the fierce and uncontrollable gallop of thousands of panic-stricken horses.

‘ As this living torrent drew nigh I sprang to the front of the tent, seized my favourite riding mare, and in addition to the hobbles which confined her, twisted the long laryette round her fore-legs, then led her immediately in front of the fire, hoping that the excited and maddened flood of horses would divide, and pass on each side of it. At the same

time I directed my servant to secure another of my horses; but he was so confused and astonished by the roaring tumultuous sound, that he seemed to have thought that the Shiennes were again attacking us—and, instead of following my instructions, ran about, before and in the tent, looking for pistols!

‘As the galloping mass drew nigh, our horses began to snort, prick up their ears, and then to tremble; and when it burst upon us they became completely ungovernable from terror. All broke loose, and joined their affrighted companions, except my mare, which struggled with the fury of a wild beast, and I only retained her by using all my strength, and at last throwing her on her side. On went the maddened troop, trampling in their headlong speed over skins and dried meat, &c., and throwing down some of the smaller tents. They were soon lost in the darkness of night and in the wilds of the prairie, and nothing more was heard of them save the distant yelping of the curs, who continued their ineffectual pursuit. This is a *stampede*, and is one of the most extraordinary scenes I have ever witnessed, as may easily be imagined by any one who reflects that this race of terror is run in darkness, only partially lighted by the fitful glare of half-extinguished fires, and that it is moreover run by several thousand steeds, driven by terror to ungovernable madness. The first origin of the panic I could never learn!’¹

¹ Hon. C. A. Murray—*Travels in North America*.

CHAPTER XXII.

POWER OF ENDURANCE AND LENGTH OF LIFE IN
THE HORSE.

THE following anecdotes will give some idea of the hardships our four-footed friends can undergo, and also a notion of the duration of life in the horse.

‘A horse’s life with moderate care and good usage is protracted to twenty-five, thirty-five, or forty years. A gentleman at Dulwich, near London, had three monuments of three horses who severally died in his possession at the ages of thirty-five, thirty-seven, and thirty-nine years. The oldest, it is to be remarked, was in a carriage the very day he died, strong and vigorous, but he was carried off in a few hours by spasmodic colic, to which he was subject. At Chesham, in Buckinghamshire, there was a horse thirty-six years old, which exhibited no symptoms of debility, nor any external signs of age except being nearly covered with warts. It was remarkable with regard to this four-footed Nestor, that when an unusually hard day’s work was required he was chosen as never failing in what was expected of

him. A horse named Wonder, formerly belonging to the Riding School at Woolwich, may be quoted as living to forty years. Mr. Culley, in his *Observations on Live Stock*, mentions one he knew which lived to forty-seven years, having during all that time a ball in his neck received in the battle of Preston Pans, in the Rebellion of 1715, which was extracted at his death in 1758; thus, judging him to be four years old at the time he received the wound (and it was probable he was more), he must at his death have been forty-seven. But even these venerables were mere babies to the barge horse of the Mersey and Irwell Navigation, which was well known to have been in his sixty-second year when he died.’¹

The hardships the horse is capable of enduring would hardly be credited by those who have not actually witnessed his power of endurance.

According to Major Butler the horses of North America rival those of the Tartar steppes in their powers of endurance. The following is from his *Great Lone Land*:

‘It was the last day of October, almost the last day of the Indian summer. My five horses were beginning to show the effect of their incessant work, but it was only in appearance, and we increased instead of diminished the distance travelled each

¹ Blaine’s *Encyclopædia of Rural Sports*.

day. We had neither hay nor oats to give them; there was nothing but the dry grass of the prairie, and no time to eat but the cold frosty night. We seldom travelled less than fifty miles a day, stopping one hour at mid-day, and going on again until dark.

‘My horse was a wonderful animal; day by day I feared that his game little limbs were growing weary, and that he must soon give out. But not a bit of it; his black coat roughened, his flanks grew thinner, but he still went gamely on. When I dismounted to save him, and let his companions go on before, he never rested till I mounted again, and then he trotted briskly on until he regained them. At the camping-place my first care was to remove saddle, saddle-cloth, and bridle, and hobble him with a bit of soft buffalo leather twisted round his fore-legs, and then poor Blackie hobbled away in the darkness to seek his provender. After a time we drove all the horses down to some lake, where Daniel (a half-breed servant) would cut little drinking holes in the ever-thickening ice. Then up would bubble the water and down went the heads of the thirsty horses at the too often bitter springs, for half the lakes and pools between the Assiniboine and South Saskatchewan are harsh with salts and alkali. Sometimes night would come down upon us whilst still in the midst of a great treeless plain, without shelter, water, or grass. Then we pushed on in inky darkness, and Blackie stepped out briskly, as if he

would never tire. On the fourth of November we rode over sixty miles, and when we camped in the lee of a little clump of bare willows, Blackie and his comrades went out to shiver through their supper on the cold snow-covered prairie, the bleakest scene my eyes had ever looked upon.

‘Poor Blackie, however, came to a violent end in crossing a half-frozen river.

‘We went out early, testing it with an axe and sharp-pointed poles. In places it was very thin, but in other parts it rang hard and solid to the blows. The dangerous part was in the very centre of the river. One light horse was passed safely over. Now came Blackie’s turn. I was uncomfortable about it, and wanted to have his shoes off, but my experienced companion demurred, and I foolishly gave way. Blackie was led by a long line; I followed close behind him. He took the ice quite readily. We had got to the centre of the river when the surface suddenly bent down, and to my horror my poor horse plunged into the deep, black, quick-running water. The horse, although he plunged suddenly down, never let his head go under water, but kept swimming stoutly round, trying all he could to get upon the ice. All his efforts were useless. A cruel wall of sharp ice cut his knees as he tried to lift them on the surface, and the current repeatedly carried him back underneath. I got almost to the edge of the hole, took hold of the line, but could give

him no assistance in his struggles. Never shall I forget how the poor brute looked at me. If ever dumb animal spoke with unutterable eloquence, that horse called to me in his agony ; he turned to me as to some one from whom he had a right to expect assistance. "Is there no help for him?" I cried to the other men. "None," was the reply; "the ice is dangerous all round." I rushed back to the camp where my rifle lay, and back to the place where the poor beast still struggled with his fate. As I raised the rifle he looked so imploringly that my hand trembled; another moment and the ball crashed through his head. With one look, never to be forgotten, poor Blackie went down under the cold ice.' ¹

The semi-wild horses of Europe, Asia, and America are supposed to be capable of almost anything ; but the following is not bad for the British cavalryman and his steed :

'It is often said the British cavalry soldier and his horse alike are unable to endure fatigue or travel long distances ; but the following is an instance of what was done in our late disastrous and inglorious war in the Transvaal. Starting at midnight on a Friday night, with a hundred hussars, General Sir E. Wood made a reconnaissance. They crossed the Buffalo River by swimming, and by sunrise had

¹ Butler's *Great Lone Land*.

penetrated thirty miles into the Transvaal. Continuing their course, they reached within ten miles of Wakkerstroom, where lay one of our beleaguered garrisons. Returning, camp was reached at six o'clock Saturday night; seventy-five miles having been traversed in eighteen hours. Not bad, this, for the much-despised British hussar.' ¹

Something has already been said of the speed and endurance of the Arab horses of Northern Africa. They are swift and hardy, no doubt; but the reader is not *obliged* to believe the following:

'There existed in ancient times several stallions whose fame has come down to us; among others *El Koura*, of the tribe of the Beni-Timin, and *Aouadj*, "the concave," of the tribe of the Beni-Helal. On the subject of this latter the following anecdote is told. His master being asked, "What canst thou relate of a surprising nature in connection with thy horse?" replied, "I was wandering one day in the desert, mounted on *Aouadj*, when I was seized with a violent thirst. By good fortune I fell in with a flock of *ketâa* (partridges) flying towards a spring. I followed them, and though holding in my horse as much as possible, I reached the water as soon as they did, without once pulling up to breathe him." It is a most extraordinary example of speed, for the flight of the *katâa*, always rapid, is greatly quickened

¹ Cassell's *Boys' Newspaper*, February 23, 1881.

when, driven by thirst, it makes for water. “Had I not,” continued the owner of *Aouadj*, “checked his speed by pulling at the bridle with all my force, I should have outstripped the partridges.”’¹

I think America may be challenged to produce a horse that can outstrip the bird in its flight.

¹ Daumas—*Horses of the Sahara*.



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